

**General Introduction
and
From the Creation to the Flood
Volume I
Translated by Franz Rosenthal**

Volume I of the thirty-eight volume translation of Ṭabarī's great *History* begins with the creation of the world and ends with the time of Noah and the Flood. It not only brings a vast amount of speculation about the early history of mankind into sharp Muslim focus, but it also synchronizes ancient Iranian ideas about the prehistory of mankind with those inspired by the Qur'an and the Bible. The volume is thus an excellent guide to the cosmological views of many of Ṭabarī's contemporaries. The translator, Franz Rosenthal, one of the world's foremost scholars of Arabic, has also written an extensive introduction to the volume that presents all the facts known about Ṭabarī's personal and professional life. Professor Rosenthal's meticulous and original scholarship has yielded a valuable bibliography and chronology of Ṭabarī's writings, both those preserved in manuscript and those alluded to by other authors. The introduction and first volume of the translation of the *History* form a ground-breaking contribution to Islamic historiography in English and will prove to be an invaluable source of information for those who are interested in Middle Eastern history but are unable to read the basic works in Arabic.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME I

General Introduction

and

From the Creation to the Flood



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME I

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translated and annotated
by

Franz Rosenthal

Yale University

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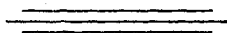
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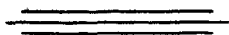
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General Editor's Preface



The History of Prophets and Kings (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), rendered in the present work as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915.

In 1971, I proposed that UNESCO include a complete translation of Ṭabarī's History in its Collection of Representative Works. At a meeting chaired by the late Roger Caillois, UNESCO agreed; but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities, mostly of a literary kind. At the time I was in charge of UNESCO's Collection of Persian Representative Works, a program which was managed within the framework of the activities of the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication (*Bungāh-i Tarjama wa Nashr-i Kitāb*). Failing to enlist the support of the Arab Commission, I persuaded the Institute to undertake the task.

My interest in the translation of Ṭabarī's history derived not only from the desire to see an outstanding historical work made available to non-Arabists, but also from the fact that Ṭabarī is

the most important source for Iranian history from the rise of the Sasanian dynasty in the third century to the year 915. By rights, the task should have been undertaken by a scholar of Islamic history and classical Arabic, in neither of which fields can I claim any expertise; but I thought it a pity to let the rare opportunity presented by the sponsors of the project to be lost. Fully aware of my limitations and convinced of the importance of the participation of specialists in the project, I enlisted the assistance of a number of excellent scholars in the field.

Preliminary work on the project began in 1974 and I invited Professor Franz Rosenthal of Yale University to bring the benefit of his scholarship and experience to this venture. An Editorial Board originally consisting of Professors Rosenthal, Ihsan Abbas of the American University in Beirut, and myself was envisaged. I later invited Professors C.E. Bosworth of the University of Manchester and Jacob Lassner of Wayne State University to cooperate as members of the Board of Editors. We then began a steady search for able and willing scholars to take part in the project. Ideally we were looking for historians of medieval Islam with a command of classical Arabic.

The Leiden edition was the obvious text on which to base the translation of the History as it is thus far the only critical and scholarly edition. It was prepared by a number of competent scholars in the last quarter of the nineteenth century under the able direction of the Dutch scholar M.J. de Goeje, and published by E.J. Brill of Leiden, Holland, in fourteen volumes with an index volume and a supplementary volume, between 1879 and 1901.

One of our first tasks was to divide the text into manageable sections to be assigned for translation and annotation. The text was divided arbitrarily into 38 sections of about 200 pages each, but in a manner that allowed each section, as far as possible, to be used independently. The general size of the sections was dictated by the desire to leave adequate space for annotation, and to make it possible for the best and busiest scholars in the field to participate. Each section was given a separate title as a short guide to its contents.

It was obvious that in a project of this size, given the differ-

*See pp. 141 ff. of Professor Rosenthal's introduction to the present volume for more details on this edition and the merits of the Cairo edition.

ent viewpoints on translation among scholars and their different styles of rendering Arabic into English, we needed clear guidelines to ensure an essential modicum of consistency. It was necessary to make the translation of some frequently used phrases and expressions uniform. For instance, *Amīr al-mu'minīn*, the title of the caliphs, can be, and has been, translated in different ways. It was important that we used a single rendering of the term ("Commander of the Faithful"). Furthermore, we had to insist on uniformity in the spelling of place-names. To accommodate these concerns, we established a series of guidelines which addressed the questions of format, rubrics, annotation, bibliography, and indexing. According to the guidelines, which were communicated to participating scholars, the project aimed at a translation both faithful and idiomatic—an ideal which we realized was nevertheless far from easy to accomplish. Concern for consistency required that the volumes be carefully edited by an Arabic scholar thoroughly familiar with the guidelines established by the Editorial Board.

This task was originally entrusted to Professor Lassner, but as the number of manuscripts claimed more of his time than he could devote to editing, Professor Bosworth's assistance, too, was enlisted; Professor Rosenthal has also been generously giving of his time for editorial purposes. Naturally this does not mean that all the volumes of *Ṭabarī* follow the same style or that all Arabic terms have been translated in exactly the same way. Variations do occur, but every effort has been made to ensure not only accuracy and readability, but also consistency.

The system of romanization commonly employed by present-day Arabists and Islamicists in the English-speaking world was chosen. Although the system is not universally accepted in all its details, it is hoped that it meets the requirements of accurate transliteration.

Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chains of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by the individual links in the chain separated by a dash (—). Thus, "according to the Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that *Ṭabarī* received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle variations in the original Arabic have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as imām and dirham, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful. Initially, each volume was to have a brief, general introduction; however, after the first few volumes, it was deemed useful to expand the scope of the introductions so that they would include a discussion of the historical context of the volumes and Ṭabarī's method of relating the events. Again, it was left to the translators to decide what was pertinent and helpful to say in their introductions. Translators were also encouraged to provide maps and genealogical tables.

Rather than give further detail of the editorial policy and principles, I reproduce here, for those who may be interested, the Guidelines set forth by the Editorial Board.

Guidelines for Translation, Annotation, and Indexing

I. Translation

1. The purpose of the translation is to provide an accurate but literate text.
2. Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Medina and the

like retain their accepted English forms. Less well-known place names are to be romanized accurately.

3. Amīr al-mu'minīn should be rendered "Commander of the Faithful". The English spelling "Caliph" is retained.

4. *Bāya'a*, *bay'ah* should be consistently translated as "to give/render the oath of allegiance".

5. Familiar technical terms, when reasonably accurate English equivalents are available, should be translated; thus, vizier (*wazīr*), judge (*qāḍī*), cubit (*dhirā'*). Other technical terms should be retained in transliteration without italics, e.g., muftī, imām, ṣūfī, dirham (drachma), dīnār (denarius), shaikh. In general, Arabic terms should be avoided as much as possible.

When a less familiar term like *dihqān* is left untranslated, an explanatory footnote with reference to the secondary literature (usually *El*) may be called for. Unfamiliar and untranslatable technical terms, e.g., *raṭl* or *dāniq*, should be rendered in italics and footnoted.

6. Referents should be supplied for pronouns as required by English usage.

7. It is unnecessary to translate the common terms of blessing after God, the Prophet, etc., except when the formula has some special import.

8. It is not always obligatory to follow the exact sequence of Arabic syntax or literary style; this should be determined by the text and idiomatic English usage. Occasionally, it may be useful to turn direct Arabic speech into indirect speech in the translation to enable the English text to flow smoothly. However, direct speech adds to the liveliness of the translation and preserves the flavor of the original text; thus it should be retained unless other considerations prevail.

II. Annotation

1. Annotations are meant to provide a better understanding of the text. Proper names as well as technical terms unfamiliar to the non-specialist require annotation.

2. A search should be made for relevant parallel sources, and these should be cited when deemed necessary.
3. Philological and stylistic comments are for the benefit of the Arabist. They should be limited to explicating the text where it presents problems.
4. Major geographical areas, e.g., Ḥijāz, Khurāsān, Sind require no comment. Less well-known places should be identified by referring to the secondary literature, such as *El*, *Elr*, *Le Strange*, Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-Buldān*, or Schwartz's *Iran*. Fuller comments are necessary only when identification of a particular place is critical to understanding the sense of the text.
5. In rare cases when the explication of the text requires more extensive treatment, this should take the form of an excursus at the end of the translation.
6. Maximum space allowed for the annotation of each volume, including excursuses, should not exceed about one-third of the text.
7. Authors should be cited by name only, except in those cases where the same author has written other works likely to be cited. Thus, Ṭabarī III/I, 250 but Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh* (Leiden), I, 250 or Ya'qūbī, *Buldān* (BGA, VIII), 250.
8. Titles should be abbreviated and follow the format of *El*² and *Elr* (but with the romanization used in this series).
9. References should generally be to standard editions. Where several editions exist, the translators should indicate their choice.
10. Passages that pose textual problems should be romanized and reproduced in footnotes.

III. Editions of the Arabic Text

The Leiden edition should serve as the basis of the translation (see above, p. x). The Cairo edition should, however, be consulted and, if the Topkapı Sarayı manuscripts used in this edition differ significantly from the Leiden edition, the difference should be taken into account and footnoted.

IV. Format and Style

A. General

1. The pagination of the Leiden edition is to be indicated in the margin in square brackets.
2. Hijrah dates are always given with corresponding Western dates; the two are separated by a /, e.g., 145/762.
3. Chains of transmission (*isnād*) should be introduced by "according to" followed by the names of the transmitters in sequence, separated by a —, with a colon after the last name; e.g., "According to Abū Ja'far—Muḥammad b. 'Umar—Muḥammad b. Šāliḥ."
4. *Kunyah* and *nisbah* are always romanized and not translated, e.g., Abū al-Ḥasan al-Khayyāṭ (not "Father of al-Ḥasan the Tailor").
5. Translations are followed by a bibliography giving full publication details for all works cited.
6. The translation of a *bayt* consisting of two hemistichs should be typed as two lines. The first line should begin with a capital letter and be indented; the second line should be further indented and begin with a lower case (small) letter, unless the first line ends with a period, in which case the second line should begin with a capital letter. If any of the hemistichs exceeds one line, the remainder is placed on the next line and is similarly indented. *Bayts* should be separated by an extra space.

B. Rubrics

1. Reigns of Caliphs should be capitalized, e.g.

THE CALIPHATE OF MARWĀN B. MUḤAMMAD

2. The year should be capitalized and beneath it the equivalent Western date should be given parentheses, e.g.,

THE YEAR 280
(March 23, 893—March 12, 894)

When indicated in the text add:

The Events of This Year

3. Other rubrics should be rendered as English titles and underlined, e.g.,

The Reason for...

4. Rubrics may often be cumbersome and difficult to translate, particularly when introduced by "mention of" or the like. In the interest of brevity, one may omit this element of the formula, e.g., instead of:

Mention of the Accounts Concerning the Death of...

translate:

The Death of...

5. The form for rubrics that merge with the text is:

The Reason for this was the killing of...

C. Pre-Islamic Names and Letters

Ancient Iranian names should be romanized according to their Arabic spelling. For biblical names, the standard English forms (see *The Westminster Bible Dictionary*) should be used. Classical names are to be rendered according to standard English practice.

In the case of titles, it will at times be desirable to put the original forms in brackets after the translation, e.g., "general" (*iṣḥābād*).

D. Paragraphs

Translators may exercise considerable license in paragraphing; however, the introduction of an *isnād* as a rule calls for a new paragraph.

Occasionally, transmitters insert lengthy addresses, sermons, doc-

uments, etc. into the text. These should be set off in special paragraphs in quotation marks. Key short passages of this kind need not be set off.

V. *The Index*

A. Contents

1. There is to be only one index.
2. It should be as complete as possible (too much is better than too little).
3. It should contain:
 - a. All personal proper names in Ṭabarī's text.
 - b. All geographical names (cities, countries, rivers, etc.) in Ṭabarī's text.
 - c. All personal and geographical names in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval context. For instance, if a note states that M.b.A. al-Baghdādī is not identical with the M.b.A. al-Kūfī mentioned by Ṭabarī, M.b.A. al-Baghdādī requires a separate entry in the index.

References to medieval sources are also to be included. Thus, if Miskawayh is cited in the note, "Miskawayh" will appear in the index.

However, proper names of modern scholars are not to be included. With respect to the notes, some selective judgment will be needed; however, if in doubt, add!

B. Form

1. Place a capital A, B, etc. at the head of each new letter of the alphabet.
2. The definite article is to be disregarded for purposes of alphabetization. al-Ṭabarī thus appears under Ṭ, but "al-" is retained.
3. If an entry under Ibn is needed, it should appear under I. Thus: Ibn M. (The same applies to Bint).
4. Abū M. appears under A. (Also Akhū; Umm under U).

5. The main entry of a name with page references is listed under the forms of the name considered to be most characteristic. Of course, the "most characteristic" form is not always obvious; one's choice may be arbitrary at times. If different forms of an individual's name appear in the text, all must be listed separately, with cross references to the main entry. For instance, assuming that Ṭabarī appears in the text or the notes under the various components of his name, the following entries are needed:

Abū Ja'far, see al-Ṭabarī

Ibn Jarīr, see al-Ṭabarī

Muḥammad b. Jarīr, see al-Ṭabarī

al-Ṭabarī (Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr), 35, 46, 109 (n.83), 72

In the main entry, the other forms of the name should be repeated; however, it is not necessary to supply them where they do not occur. Thus "Miskawayh" is sufficient; his given names need not be supplied.

VI. General

1. The translators are expected to provide a substantial introduction that places the volume in historical perspective. The introduction may contain not only a summary of the volume's contents, but also comments on the significance of the events, an evaluation of Ṭabarī's reporting, and a discussion of parallel sources.

2. Maps and genealogical tables are helpful, in fact, welcome, provided the translator is able to furnish them.

E.Y.



Acknowledgments



My foremost thanks to the National Endowment for the Humanities and its Division of Research Programs for their continued support and encouragement.

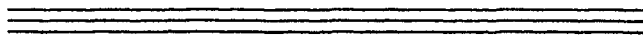
I also wish to thank sincerely the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their valuable assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professors C.E. Bosworth and Jacob Lassner for their painstaking and meticulous editing; Professor Michael Morony of the University of California at Los Angeles for undertaking the task of dividing the text into volume portions; and Dr. Susan Mango, formerly of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and her successor, Dr. Martha Chomiak, for their genuine interest in the project and their advocacy of it.

I am grateful to the State University of New York Press for volunteering to undertake the publication of the series; to its Director, Mr. William D. Eastman, for showing himself earnestly committed to the project; and to Professor Said Arjomand, the editor of the Middle Eastern Series of SUNY Press, for bringing the project to the attention of the Board of the Press.

Special thanks are due to Dina Amin, who as Executive Secretary has managed with great care the administrative aspects of the project, and to Mrs. Patsy King of Columbia University's Office of Projects and Grants for her patient handling of the bureaucratic matters pertaining to the project. I trust that the completion of

the project and the publication of the index volume will provide me with a second opportunity to express my gratitude to others who have assisted the project.

E.Y.



General Introduction





Translator's Foreword



This volume contains the first part of the Ṭabarī translation, a biographical sketch, and a discussion of what can be said at present about Ṭabarī's literary output, as well as some remarks on the English translation of the History. Much work remains to be done before all the data are clarified and Ṭabarī's works and his intellectual position in his environment have been fully studied. Although considerable effort has been expended to this end in recent years, it can truly be said that the task has just begun.

It has been deemed advisable that the General Introduction and the translation of Volume I be kept as separate as possible, even if they appear under the same cover. However, continuous pagination has been adopted, and entries for the Bibliography and for the Index have been combined. On the other hand, the numbering of footnotes starts afresh in the Translation. Therefore, in the General Introduction, cross-references to footnotes in the Translation are prefaced by "translation." Inversely, in the Translation, cross-references to footnotes in the General Introduction are marked accordingly. In view of the different character of this volume as compared to the other volumes of this series, the Index should, perhaps, have been considerably modified, but this has been done only to a very small degree, as stated in the note at the head of the Index.

Some of Ṭabarī's works still in manuscript have remained inaccessible to me. I am grateful to the Escorial Library for having provided me with a microfilm of the manuscript of *Tabṣīr* and to

the Beinecke Library of Yale University for making me a copy of the Ṭabarī biography from the Landberg manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir. I have discussed the "praiseworthy position" (below, 71 ff.) with a number of colleagues—foremost among them Josef van Ess to whom I am indebted for essential references. Gerhard Böwering helped me out with a xerox from his copy of the biography of Ṭabarī in Dhahabī's *Nubalā'*. My former student, Dr. Elise Crosby, was instrumental in obtaining for me a copy of the *Ḥadīth al-himyān*. Yale University Library and its former Near East librarian Dr. Jonathan Rodgers have been as helpful to me in connection with this work as the library staff has always been during the past thirty years.

Franz Rosenthal

The Life and Works of al-Ṭabarī

A Remark on the Sources

The information we have on Ṭabarī's life and works is unusually instructive in a number of ways, but it leaves many large gaps in our knowledge. Important questions have to be asked for which no definite answers are available. In writing his biography, it is also necessary, and has been attempted here, to distinguish as clearly as possible between securely known data and what appears to be valid information but in fact remains the result of unverifiable speculation.¹

Ṭabarī shows himself very reluctant to talk about his personal life, at least in the preserved works, which constitute only part of his large literary production. Although it is by no means certain, he may have revealed more about his personal situation in some of his lost writings, for instance, the original *Dhayl al-mudhayyāl* in which he discussed his teachers.² He does provide his biographer with the names of numerous scholars with whom he had personal contact. There can be no doubt that the "I was told" and "we were told" at the opening of the chains of transmitters³ have as a rule to be taken literally as indicating direct personal contact or contact within the setting of public lectures and instruction. In most cases, however, it is unfortunately not clear how close such

1. Biographical notices such as the one by R. Paret in the first edition of *EI*, s. v. al-Ṭabarī (see also *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 556 f.), contain the elementary data and may serve for quick information.

2. See below, 89 f. For the *Ḥadīth al-himyān*, see below, 98 ff.; whatever one may think about its genuineness, it does not qualify as a "work by" Ṭabarī.

3 See below, 147.

contact may have been. Knowledge of the circle of individuals among whom Ṭabarī moved is invaluable for understanding the events of his life. It has been imperative therefore to try to learn as much as possible about his authorities, colleagues, students, and acquaintances, and to establish their relations with him. Conversely, where it proved impossible to identify an individual, we are left in the dark with respect to potentially important, even crucial, nexuses.

As a scholar convinced of the preeminence of the material with which he dealt, Ṭabarī was not inclined to waste time and space on such mundane matters as when and where he had contact with his authorities. Occasionally, he might very well have indicated such data, for it was the custom to keep notes including the name of a teacher and the time of attendance at his classes. In fact, Ṭabarī did so as a young student; he may have continued the custom later in his life, but for his own information and not for publication.⁴ It must also be assumed that he often referred to someone with whom he undoubtedly had some personal contact; but later, he used the source that was transmitted to him by that individual in its written (published) form and quoted from it while pretending all the time to rely upon oral transmission. This was no doubt the manner in which he handled quotations in *Tafsīr* from earlier Qur'ān commentaries. It also seems very likely that he relied on written (but presumably unpublished) "books" when transmitting information that had been preserved as the heirloom of a particular family such as that of Muhammad b. Sa'd.⁵ In certain cases, the function of Ṭabarī's direct informant seems to have been hardly more than to legitimize the use of a recension of a work in its written form, as in those of Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī as the transmitter of Abū Ma'shar,⁶ or of al-Sarī b. Yahyā as a transmitter of Sayf b. 'Umar.⁷ Al-Sarī, it should be noted, transmitted Sayf's historical information to Ṭabarī by written communication; under the circumstances, it is rather doubtful whether there was indeed personal contact between him and Ṭabarī where

4. See *Irshād*, VI, 431, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 51, and below, 21.

5. See below, translation, n. 337.

6. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 292; Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1141 and frequently. It seems uncertain whether Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī is identical with the person listed in Ibn Abi Hātim, I, 1, 44; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, I, 143, as suggested in Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 796.

7. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 311 f.

the formula "he told me/us" is used.⁸

In sum, we are faced with the fact that Ṭabarī's own works, as far as they are preserved, are a very limited source of hard biographical data. They do provide us with many important leads, and they are of the greatest value to us because they reveal his scholarly personality and attitude.

No biographies of any length appear to have been written during Ṭabarī's lifetime, but there were a number of men who had known him personally and who wrote on his life and works.

Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Kāmil (260-350/873[4]-961),⁹ who had a distinguished career as a judge and productive scholar, was on familiar terms with him. He was among those present when Ṭabarī died. An early follower of Ṭabarī's legal school, he seems to have veered away from it later in his life.¹⁰ His monograph became a prime source for Ṭabarī biographers.

While Ibn Kāmil's prominence earned him obituary notices in a number of reference works, another individual who wrote a biography and seems to have been close to Ṭabarī, Abū Muḥammad 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī, remains obscure. We can place neither him nor his supposed monograph.¹¹

Abū Muḥammad 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Ja'far al-Farghānī (282-362/895[6]-972[3]),¹² prepared an edition of Ṭabarī's *History* and wrote a continuation (*Ṣilah*) to it. He had personal contact with Ṭabarī as a student, but it is difficult for us to say how extensive this contact may have been. He devoted a long obituary notice to Ṭabarī in his *Ṣilah*, which served as an important source

8. As, for instance, Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1845, 1848, 1851, etc., as against the use of the verb "to write" in I, 1749, 1921, etc. Written information from a certain 'Alī b. Aḥmad b. al-Ḥasan al-Ṭijlī is mentioned in Ṭabarī, *History*, I, 1311. See also, in particular, the reference to Ziyād b. Ayyūb in I, 3159, below, n. 210. See also below, n. 455, on al-Mas'ūdī's relationship with Ṭabarī.

9. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 523 f. We cannot pinpoint the exact location of Ibn Kāmil's East Baghdad residence on Shāri' 'Abd al-Ṣamad in Suwayqat Abī Ubaydallāh (see *TB*, IV, 357, l. 11; Miskawayh, in *Eclipse*, II, 184; Lassner, *Topography*, 78-80). It was probably closer to Ṭabarī's mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash than to his home. Miskawayh, who made very extensive use of *History*, studied the work with Ibn Kāmil. He read some of it to him and received his permission (*ijāzah*) to use the rest, see *Eclipse*, II, 184. Cf. J. Kraemer, *Humanism*, 223.

10. See below, nn. 251 and 301.

11. His work, as that of Ibn Kāmil, is specifically stated by Yāqūt to have been a monograph; see *Irshād*, VI, 462, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 94.

12. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 337, and *History*, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv, n. 7.

of biographical information. Another valuable document from al-Farghānī's hand is an *ijāzah* giving permission to a certain 'Alī b. 'Imrān and (?) a certain Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad to teach a number of Ṭabarī's works which al-Farghānī himself had studied with Ṭabarī. It was originally affixed to a volume of *Tafsīr*, no doubt the one used by the mentioned student(s), and dated from Sha'bān 336/February–March 948.¹³

Another follower of Ṭabarī's legal school inserted much information on Ṭabarī in his historical work that depended on (continued?) Ṭabarī's work. We know not much more about him than his name, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Ḥabīb al-Saqatī al-Ṭabarī. He can be assumed to have lived while Ṭabarī was still alive.¹⁴

Among those who were born during Ṭabarī's lifetime but had no personal contact with him, the Egyptian historian Abū Sa'īd b. Yūnus (281–347/894–958) may be mentioned. It was natural for him to include a notice on Ṭabarī in his work on "Strangers in Egypt," because Ṭabarī had visited Egypt for purposes of study.¹⁵ Others in his generation who wrote biographical works would certainly not have overlooked a man of Ṭabarī's stature. However, as far as our information goes, another biography in monograph form was not written for about three hundred years, at which time the Egyptian scholar al-Qiftī (568–646/1172–1248) compiled a Ṭabarī biography, entitled *al-Taḥrīr fī akhbār Muḥammad b. Jarīr*.¹⁶ Al-Qiftī was a great admirer of Ṭabarī, for he not only wrote this monograph but took the opportunity to list Ṭabarī in other works of his, such as his dictionaries of grammarians and of poets named Muḥammad; neither work, especially the latter, necessarily required mention of Ṭabarī.

None of the early biographies, including al-Qiftī's monographs, has come down to us. We have to rely on excerpts preserved by later scholars. These excerpts give us some idea of the contents of those biographies, and they furnish the most reliable information at our disposal. Among the biographical sources that are

13. The text of the *ijāzah* is quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 426 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44 f. Two recipients of the *ijāzah* seem to be mentioned, but a singular pronoun is used to refer to them.

14. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 24.

15. Ibn Yūnus is referred to in connection with Ṭabarī by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXII, and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 192. For Ibn Yūnus, see *El*², III, 969b, s. v.

16. See Qiftī, *Inbāh*, III, 90, and *Muḥammadūn*, 264.

preserved, the oldest is the *History of Baghdad* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463/1002–71), cited here as *TB*.¹⁷ The Khaṭīb's biographical notice was quoted by practically all later biographers. Since Ṭabarī spent some time in Damascus on his western journey, Ibn 'Asākir (499–571/1105–76) devoted to him a long and informative entry in his *History of Damascus*. He went beyond *TB* and added much information from the old sources.¹⁸ By far the most extensive coverage of Ṭabarī's life and works is the one we owe to the great geographer and biographer Yāqūt. He was a contemporary and long-term associate of al-Qifṭī, whose enthusiasm for Ṭabarī he apparently shared. Yāqūt's article on Ṭabarī in his *Dictionary of learned men and litterateurs*, cited here as *Irshād*, reproduces long excerpts from the old sources. It seems that he quotes them quite literally. The available text is not free from mistakes. In all likelihood, however, they do not affect anything essential.¹⁹

Ṭabarī's fame was such that no biographer in subsequent centuries who touched on Ṭabarī's age and fields of scholarly activity could afford not to mention him. Biographical notices are numerous, if often quite perfunctory. Some provide valuable bits of additional information not found elsewhere, but that is rare.²⁰ As a rule, they do not offer noteworthy biographical data beyond what is found in the works of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Ibn 'Asākir, and Yāqūt. Among the longer notices, reference may be made here, without prejudice, to those in the *Muntaẓam* (VI,

17. See *TB*, II, 162–9.

18. Attention to Ibn 'Asākir's biography of Ṭabarī was first drawn by Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit." In a letter to T. Nöldeke, he mentions that this edition was a difficult task, see Róbert Simon, *Ignác Goldziher*, 197. Goldziher published only the part dealing with Ṭabarī's works. The manuscript he used is now in the Yale University Library, Ms. L-312 (Cat. Nemoy 1182), fols. 109a–117b. On the basis of the same manuscript, the complete text was published in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, LXIX–XCVI, with comparison with and additions from other biographies, in particular, those of Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, and al-Maqrizī, *Muqaffā*, also Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, as well as brief passages from al-Dhahabī and al-Nawawī. [Al-Dhahabī's source is now available, see Mu'āfā, *Jalīs*, I, 472, quoted in *TB*, X, 98 f., in the biography of Ibn al-Mu'tazz, see below, n. 464].

19. See *Irshād*, VI, 423–62, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40–94. Rifā'ī offers some suggestions and corrections. For Yāqūt's sources, see Bergsträsser, "Quellen," 201 f. For his biography, see Sellheim, "Neue Materialien," 87–118, and *Materialien zur arabischen Literaturgeschichte*, I, 226–31.

20. See, for instance, below, n. 123.

170–2) of Ibn al-Jawzī (507–97/1126–1200), the *Nubalā'* (XIV, 267–82) of al-Dhahabī (673–748/1274–1348),²¹ and the large *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah* (III, 120–8) of Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (727–71/1327–70). Other works have, of course, been mentioned here wherever indicated.²²

Not surprisingly, the critical evaluation of the available material presents difficult problems. The reports we have are expectedly partial to Ṭabarī. In fact, they can be suspected of an attempt to idealize him. Since Ṭabarī expressed views on nearly every aspect of religion, law, and society, he inevitably made many enemies. They left no biographical notices known to us, and their views are rarely heard.²³ We may question whether the anecdotes told about him actually occurred and whether he did in fact do all the things and make all the remarks attributed to him. Furthermore, there was, and is, the temptation to suppose that a famous person had contact with any other famous person in his time and place. Thus, there is occasionally some doubt as to whether the individuals named in anecdotes, on which we must rely for reconstructing some of the data of Ṭabarī's life, were accurately reported.²⁴ In view of these and other difficulties, the only sound procedure is the one followed here: Unless there is irrefutable proof to the contrary, we must assume that the reports reflect reality, and that idealizing descriptions depict, if not reality, then something equally or more important, namely, the perception of contemporaries. In either case, they provide legitimate material for the biographer, to be used, it is true, with appropriate caution.

His Early Life

Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was born in Āmul, the principal capital city of Ṭabaristān, located in the lowlands of the

21. Al-Dhahabī had occasion to come back to Ṭabarī in other works. His *Ta'rikh al-Islām* presumably contained a lengthy obituary notice. It was not available to me.

22. For instance, the biographies in Ibn Khallikān and al-Nawawī were already edited and translated by Hamaker, *Specimen*, 21–32. For Ḥājji Khalifah and d'Herbelot, see, in particular, below, 138.

23. Some hostile Ḥanbalite information seems to have entered the biographical mainstream; see below, 73 f.

24. The often crucial dates for individuals connected with Ṭabarī are unfortunately not always as certain as we might wish; see below, translation, v f.

region at a distance of about twenty kilometers from the southern shore of the Caspian.²⁵ It was sometime during the winter of A.D. 839, when al-Mu'taṣim ruled as caliph in Baghdad. Ṭabarī himself was not quite sure whether his birth fell near the end of the hijrah year 224 or in the beginning of 225. According to local memory, it coincided with some noteworthy happening, but those whom he asked at some later time in his life were uncertain what that happening had been. Ṭabaristān certainly went through an eventful time at this period of its history, though the political circumstances may not have been responsible for the particular happening by which Ṭabarī's birth was remembered. In the years 224 and 225, the governor of the region, Māziyār b. Qārīn, a recent convert to Islam and a member of the Bāwandid dynasty who were still non-Muslims,²⁶ rebelled against control by the Ṭāhirid dynasty of governors and thus against the central authorities of the caliphate. In the course of the rebellion, heavy taxes were placed upon the landowners of Āmul, and the city itself was laid waste. We do not know in which way and to what degree these events affected Ṭabarī's family. It is possible that the attempt to levy new taxes on farms and real estate had a temporary unsettling effect on it. With the victory of the Ṭāhirids, Āmul seems to have entered upon a prosperous phase of its history.

Ṭabarī retained close ties to his hometown throughout his life. At some later date, he wrote an essay detailing his religious principles, and addressed it to the people of Ṭabaristān. He felt that erroneous doctrines, such as those propounded by Mu'tazilites and Khārijites, were spreading there.²⁷ Shī'ah influence also was strong. 'Alids and their supporters achieved political hegemony when the Zaydī dynasty came into power in 250/864. Probably about 290/903, on his second (and, apparently, last) of his recorded visits home, his outspoken defense of the virtues of the first two caliphs against Shī'ah attacks caused him much trouble. Reportedly, he had to leave the region in a great hurry. An old man who had given him timely warning of the danger awaiting him was severely beaten by the authorities; cognizant of his indebtedness

25. See "Āmol" in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, I, 980 f.

26. See "Bāwand" in *Et*², I, 1110. On the Ṭāhirids, see, for instance, C.E. Bosworth, in *The Cambridge History of Iran*, IV, 90 ff.

27. On *Tabṣīr*, below, 126 f.

to him, Ṭabarī had him brought to Baghdad where he treated him hospitably.²⁸ There may be no special significance to the fact that men from Ṭabaristān were rather numerous in the historian's circle of acquaintances and that *History* pays a good deal of attention to events in Ṭabaristān, but it could be another indication of Ṭabarī's attachment to the land of his birth.

Information on the more remote history of Ṭabarī's family is restricted to the names of his ancestors on his father's side. Yazid is reasonably well-established as the name of his grandfather. It is mentioned regularly, and it also occurs in Ṭabarī's own works, though rarely and with somewhat doubtful authenticity.²⁹ Beyond Yazid, the names of Ṭabarī's great-grandfather and great-great-grandfather appear as Kathīr b. Ghālib in one tradition, while another less common one knows only of a great-grandfather named Khālid.³⁰ These are all good Arabic Muslim names and as such contain no hint at ancient non-Muslim roots on his father's side. They would lead into the mid-second/eighth century before Ṭabaristān came, in a way, fully under Muslim control. It is thus not entirely excluded, if far from certain, that Ṭabarī's paternal forebears were Muslim colonists who migrated to Āmul and settled there at some date. Ṭabarī himself discouraged speculation about his ancestry. When he was asked by a certain Muḥammad b. Ja'far b. Jumhūr³¹ about his ancestry, he replied by quoting a verse of Ru'bah b. al-'Ajjāj, in which the famous Umayyad poet deprecated pride in one's pedigree.

(My father) al-'Ajjāj has established my reputation,³² so call me

28. See *Irshād*, VI, 456, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 85 f.

29. We can never be sure whether "b. Yazid" goes back to Ṭabarī's own text or was added in the course of the manuscript transmission. See *Tafsīr*, III, 107, 1. 14 (beginning of sūrah 3). The subscription of the ancient manuscript of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, x, refers to Yazid, but the text later on [p. 242] does not have it. It is, however, frequent in Kern's edition of *Ikhtilāf*.

30. Thus Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, 1. 9. His source was al-Mu'āfa, who might have had reliable information; still, the majority opinion seems to be correct. See also Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 191.

31. He cannot be further identified. He appears to have been a follower of Ṭabarī's school. His name is given only in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIII f., who indicates that his information goes back to al-Mu'āfa.

32. Cf. Qur. 94:4. Ru'bah's *Dīwān* does not have "my." A reading *dhikrā*, and not *dhikrī*, has nothing to recommend itself.

by my name (alone)! When long pedigrees are given
(for others), it suffices me.³³

Perhaps, Ṭabarī wished to express disdain for the view that merit was based upon ancestry rather than individual accomplishment (even if Ru'bah's verse is not a good example for it). This was a topic hotly debated in Islam at all times. On the other hand, it could merely mean that Ṭabarī did not have memorable ancestors whom he knew about or cared for.

A strange family relationship was claimed for Ṭabarī on the basis of a couple of verses ascribed to the well-known poet Abū Bakr (Muḥammad b. al-'Abbās) al-Khuwārizmī, whose death is placed about 383/993 or a decade later.³⁴ The verses speak about the poet's relationship to the "Jarīr family (*banū Jarīr*)."³⁵ He states that he was born in Āmul and boasts that the Banū Jarīr were 'Alid extremists (*rāfiḍī*) through the female lineage (*'an kalālah*), while he himself was a *rāfiḍī* by paternal inheritance.³⁶ The relationship was supposed to be as close as that of nephew and uncle (?), which would be chronologically impossible. The little we know about Ṭabarī's family does not support such a relationship or the existence of an extended "Jarīr family." As suggested by Yāqūt, the connection of the verses with the historian may have been the work of hostile Ḥanbalites who wished to brand him as a Shī'ite. But we also hear from a Shī'ite source that the other Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, whose grandfather's name was Rustam and who was the likely author of *al-Mustarshid* (see below, 118 f.), applied the verses to himself, with the difference that he claimed maternal relationship while someone else claimed paternal lineage for their Shī'ah loyalties.³⁶ At any rate, the story can be safely disregarded as absurd and unhistorical, as far as Ṭabarī is concerned.

His father, Jarīr, was a man of property, although he was not

33. See Ru'bah, *Dīwān*, 160, no. 57, ll. 8 f., translation, 215; Ibn 'Asākir (above, n. 31); *Irshād*, VI, 428, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 47.

34. See Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 635 f. Abū Bakr al-Khuwārizmī was also called al-Ṭabarkhazī, because his father came from Khuwārizm and his mother from Ṭabaristān; see Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 37 f.; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 400; and Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, III, 191. See further *EP*, IV, 1069, s.v. al-Kh^wārazmī.

35. See Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, 68. Yāqūt rejects the story as malicious Ḥanbalite slander picked up by the Shī'ah poet, but it appears to have been accepted by scholars such as Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, IV, 192, and Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 284, III, 192.

36. See Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, I, 301.

rich. As long as he lived, he provided his son with an income, and Ṭabarī inherited (his share of) the estate after his father's death, the date of which is not known to us. According to an anecdote placed in the time of the wazirate of Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh b. Khāqān, who became wazīr in 299/912, even at that late period of Ṭabarī's life, the pilgrim caravan brought the proceeds from his lands (*day'ah*) in Ṭabaristān to Baghdad—as usual, it seems, in the form of merchandise rather than cash. It was Ṭabarī's custom to use the occasion to make gifts to friends and acquaintances to whom he was obligated. This time, he selected³⁷ a sable estimated to be worth fifty dinārs, wrapped it up in a large parcel, and had it conveyed to the wazīr, who was surprised when the parcel was opened in his presence and he saw the valuable gift. He accepted it, but he indicated that he did not want Ṭabarī to give any more such presents to him in the future. On his part, Ṭabarī had intended the precious fur as a countergift for one the wazīr had offered him, and it was to serve as a hint that as a matter of principle, he felt he could not accept any large gifts from the wazīr or anybody else.³⁸

The modest degree of financial independence which Ṭabarī enjoyed throughout his life enabled him as a student to travel, and it gave him some freedom to follow his scholarly and moral ideals when he was an established scholar and other potential sources of income were readily at his disposal. Living and traveling at rather large distances from his source of income, it could happen that his father's stipend did not reach him on time, and he experienced some temporary inconvenience. Once, he was forced to sell some of his garments, such as the long sleeves characteristic of the scholar's robe.³⁹ In Egypt, he and his friends even had to go

37. Yāqūt is not very clear as to whether Ṭabarī bought the fur from the proceeds or whether it was part of the merchandise he had received. There is good reason to assume the latter. It could conceivably suggest that the total value of the merchandise was substantial.

38. See *Irshād*, VI, 457 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 88 f. The informants here, Abū al-Tayyib al-Qāsim b. Ahmad b. al-Shā'ir and Sulaymān b. al-Khāqānī (if these are the correct forms of their names), cannot be identified. Ṭabarī's attitude toward gifts will come up repeatedly here, as it is a recurrent motif in his biography. The exchange of gifts played an important role in Muslim society and found much attention among jurists (see, for instance *El*², III, 342-40, s. v. *hiba*). For Ṭabarī's views on the acceptance of gifts from non-Muslims—a subject that had major political implications—one may compare his discussion in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, 207-21.

39. See below, n. 69. Ibn Abi Ḥātim, *Taqdimah*, 363 f., reports a similar experi-

hungry until a local dignitary miraculously came to their rescue and sent them a large amount of money.⁴⁰

At a young age, Ṭabarī displayed his precociousness, which was remarkable even in a world where precociousness was not unusual and was carefully nurtured by parents and teachers. As an old man probably in his seventies, he recalled that he knew the Qur'ān by heart when he was seven, served as prayer leader when he was eight, and studied (lit., "wrote down") traditions of the Prophet when he was nine. This remark may sound a little boastful, but there is no reason to doubt it. The words appear to be those actually used when he wanted to convince the father of a nine-year-old boy, the young son of his future biographer Ibn Kāmil, that it was not too early for Ibn Kāmil to have the boy study with him and that he should not use the boy's tender years and lack of preparation (*qillat al-adab*) as an excuse for not doing so. In order to stress his point, he told Ibn Kāmil of a dream which his own father had once had about his young son. "My father," Ṭabarī reminisced, "had a dream concerning me. He saw me standing before the Prophet with a bag filled with stones, and I was spreading some of them in front of him. A dream interpreter told my father that the dream signified that I would be a good Muslim as an adult and a strong defender of the religious law of the Prophet. As a consequence, my father was ready to support my studies ('my quest of knowledge' *ṭalab al-'ilm*) when I was still a small boy."⁴¹

Whether it was an actual dream or a literary fiction does not really matter. Dreams commonly served as a means to express basic convictions. In this case, the dream mirrored the desire of Ṭabarī's father to further his son's education, although he himself most likely had no specialized scholarly training. He encouraged him to leave home "in quest of knowledge," when he reached puberty (*tara'ra'a*). We are told reliably that young Ṭabarī left home

ence of his father.

40. See below, n. 109. It was, of course, nothing rare for students and many other young men to live on paternal bounty. Thus, Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, II, 179, tells about a Khurāsānian who every year received his annual allowance through the pilgrim caravan. Unable, or unwilling, to stretch it to last the entire year, he compiled debts to be paid off when next year's caravan arrived, only to get into a very tight situation when the caravan did not bring anything for him one year because his father had been seriously ill.

41. See *Irshād*, 429 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 49. On Ṭabarī's good-humored banter with the boy's names on this occasion, see below, n. 163.

in 236/850-1, when he was only twelve.⁴² It often was a wrenching decision, especially for a mother, to send a child off to college, for this is what "traveling in quest of knowledge" really meant in cases of young boys such as Ṭabarī. The situation was aggravated by the fact that there were no organized "colleges" in his day (as there were in later centuries) which could have provided institutional support. Providing for proper living arrangements for the youngsters was left to individuals, family connections, or, preferably, teachers. We know nothing about Ṭabarī's mother, not even if she was still alive when he left home. If she was, she might have felt like the mother of Ibn Bashshār, one of Ṭabarī's influential teachers, when her son was faced with the decision of going away to study. She did not want him to leave, and he heeded his mother's advice and stayed, at least for the time being. Later, he felt that it was on account of this act of filial piety that he was blessed with a successful career.⁴³

Young Ṭabarī left to receive his further schooling in the nearest metropolis, al-Rayy, on the site of present-day Teheran. The teachers in Āmul whom his father had engaged for him naturally did not measure up in prestige to those in al-Rayy. It was there that, during a stay of apparently close to five years, Ṭabarī received the intellectual formation that made him the scholar he was to become. There is no record of his having visited other scholarly centers before leaving for Baghdad, where he arrived "shortly after the death of Ibn Ḥanbal" in the latter half of 241, that is, late in 855 or early in the following year.⁴⁴ "Traveling in quest of knowledge" could mean brief visits to famous authorities. Frequently, however, and no doubt in the case of very young students such as Ṭabarī, it entailed an extended stay and the systematic attendance at regular courses rather than occasional lectures. A teacher would quiz his students in the evening on the material they had taken down during the day. When the students happened to take a course with a teacher who lived outside the city limits, they had to run back "like mad (*ka-al-majānīn*)" in order to be on time for

42. The source for the precise date is Maslamah b. al-Qāsim, as quoted by Ibn Hajar. See below, n. 123.

43. See *TB*, II, 102, ll. 3 f.

44. See *Irshād*, 430, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 50.

another class.⁴⁵

Most prominent among his teachers in al-Rayy was Ibn Ḥumayd. Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd al-Rāzi⁴⁶ was in his seventies at the time, and he died a decade later, in 248/862. He became one of Ṭabarī's most frequently cited authorities. Ibn Ḥumayd had lectured in Baghdad and had been welcomed there by Ibn Ḥanbal, who is even said to have transmitted traditions on his authority. If it is correct that Ibn Ḥanbal's son 'Abdallāh (213-90/828[9]-903)⁴⁷ had studied with him, his stay in Baghdad cannot have been very much in the past, unless, of course, 'Abdallāh was a small child when he attended his lectures, which is quite possible. In Ṭabarī's time, Ibn Ḥumayd had apparently retired to his native city. We have no information that he returned to Baghdad during his remaining years, in which case Ṭabarī could have continued his studies with him there. Thus, the material he quoted on Ibn Ḥumayd's authority was acquired by him in al-Rayy. No doubt he filled his notebooks with it for future reference, but he can also be assumed to have checked it all against the books upon which Ibn Ḥumayd had based his teaching, and supplemented it from them.

Another teacher from Ṭabarī's days in al-Rayy was al-Muthannā b. Ibrāhīm, whose *nisbah* was al-Āmulī (rather than al-Ubullī as found in *Irshād*).⁴⁸ Practically nothing more is known about him, but he also served as an important source of information for Ṭabarī's writings. Another, even less-known teacher of Ṭabarī was a certain Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dawlābī. His main claim to distinction was that he had been a student of the reputable Sufyān (b. 'Uyaynah).⁴⁹ It must be said that our lack of knowledge about these men does not mean that their standing in the world of contemporary scholarship was low in any respect.

It is significant that the instruction which Ṭabarī received from Ibn Ḥumayd in al-Rayy extended to the historical works of Ibn

45. See *Irshād*, 430, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 49 f.

46. For Ibn Ḥumayd, see below, translation, n. 26. *Irshād*, VI, 424, l. 2. ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 41, l. 2, had Aḥmad for Muḥammad by mistake (misprint?).

47. See below, 70. For Ibn Ḥumayd's connection with Ibn Ḥanbal and the latter's son 'Abdallāh, see *TB*, II, 259, ll. 4 f., 12, and 260, ll. 4 f.

48. See below, translation, n. 179.

49. See *History*, below, I, 1806; *Tafsīr*, VI, 3, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 4:148), XI, 94, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 10:64), XVIII, 60, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 24:5).

Ishāq, famous above all as the author of the life of Muḥammad (*al-Sīrah*). He thus learned about pre-Islamic and early Islamic history. Knowledge of it was needed by religious scholars in general. In Ṭabarī's case, more importantly, it would seem that in the process, the seeds were planted for his wider interest in history which later culminated in the writing of his great *History*. According to Yāqūt, Ibn Kāmil is supposed to have reported that it was under the guidance of the just-mentioned Aḥmad b. Ḥammād al-Dawlābī on the authority of Salamah⁵⁰ that Ṭabarī studied Ibn Ishāq's *Mubtada'* and *Maghāzī* and thus laid the groundwork for *History*.⁵¹ However, in *History* itself, the *isnād* is always Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq. The reference to Ibn Ḥammād in this connection is no doubt a mistake, which, however, could hardly have occurred in Ibn Kāmil's original text but must have crept in during the course of transmission.⁵² Ṭabarī later on continued his study of Ibn Ishāq. In al-Kūfah, both Hannād b. al-Sarī and Abū Kurayb transmitted to him information from Ibn Ishāq according to another recension, that of Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/814[5]).⁵³ At that time, Ṭabarī probably did not receive instruction in special courses devoted entirely to Ibn Ishāq. It was rather through incidental reference that he learned more about him there.

Ibn Ḥumayd's status as an authorized transmitter of Ibn Ishāq's *Maghāzī* through Salamah was attacked by an otherwise unknown 'Alī b. Mihrān. Ibn Mihrān claimed plagiarism on the part of Ibn Ḥumayd. According to him, Ibn Ḥumayd did not receive the material directly from Salamah but through him. Therefore, he contended, a certain Ishāq b. Maṣṣūr (possibly the bearer of the name who died in 251/865?), who had studied with Ibn Ḥumayd just like Ṭabarī, was right when he classified Ibn Ḥumayd as

50. For Salamah b. al-Faḍl, judge of al-Rayy, see below, translation, n. 49.

51. See *Irshād*, VI, 430, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 50.

52. It is possible that both Ibn Ḥammād and Ibn Ḥumayd (who also taught Qur'ān commentary) lectured on the same material from Salamah from Ibn Ishāq in al-Rayy at the same time, but it does not seem very likely.

53. For Hannād (below, translation, n. 71), see *History*, I, 970, and for Abū Kurayb (below, translation, n. 77), see *History*, II, 311, III, 52. For Ibn Bukayr's recension, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 289, and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 434 f., where Hannād and Abū Kurayb are listed among Ibn Bukayr's transmitters.

a "liar."⁵⁴ Quarrels of this kind were not uncommon, but even if there was some truth to the accusation directed against Ibn Ḥumayd, it would in no way reflect upon Ibn Ḥumayd's decisive role in Ṭabarī's development as a scholar.

A continuation of his studies in the center of the Muslim world, the capital city of Baghdad, was a natural choice for Ṭabarī, who by then was not yet seventeen years old. Baghdad not only counted many of the greatest representatives of Muslim scholarship among its residents, but scholars as well as litterateurs also came to lecture there for longer or shorter periods. Many stopped over on their way to or, more commonly, from the pilgrimage to Mecca, offering students the opportunity to add to their store of knowledge. In fact, if we can believe the *Story of the Belt* (below, p. 99), Ṭabarī himself went on the pilgrimage in 240/855, possibly before his first arrival in Baghdad (and not in the time between his arrival in Baghdad and his study trip to southern Iraq). The date of Ṭabarī's arrival in Baghdad is fixed by the statement that what attracted him to Baghdad was the expectation to study with Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (164–241/780–855), but Ibn Ḥanbal died shortly before his arrival.⁵⁵ It cannot be entirely ruled out that this report was invented to defuse later Ḥanbalite animosity against Ṭabarī. There is, however, nothing inherently impossible in it, even though Ibn Ḥanbal was no longer fully active at the time. Ibn Ḥumayd might very well have suggested to his bright young student that it was advisable for him to profit from contact with the great traditionist, no matter how slight such contact would be.

Rather soon,⁵⁶ Ṭabarī left Baghdad in order to continue his study and research in the great towns south of Baghdad, al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah, including Wāsiṭ on the way. A number of famous authorities, mostly men already at least in their seventies, lived and taught there. It would have been possible for Ṭabarī to make repeated trips while spending some time in between in Baghdad, but a student was hardly likely to do this; thus, it can be confidently

54. See *TB*, II, 262 f.

55. See above, n. 44.

56. The assumption of Hūfī, 35, that Ṭabarī left Baghdad right away seems unlikely. *Irshād*, VI, 430, ll. 19 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 50, states that he began to study in Baghdad and then left for al-Basrah. His tutorship, which has been assigned by me to a later date (see below, 21 f.), could conceivably fall into this time, but this would seem improbable.

assumed he undertook just one extended journey. The date when it started can be established with reasonable accuracy. Some of the authorities with whom he studied, such as the Baṣrans Ḥumayd b. Maṣ'adah, who is often quoted in *Tafsīr*, and Bishr b. Mu'adh al-'Aqadī,⁵⁷ died at the latest in 245/859–60; but one of the Kūfan scholars, Hannād b. al-Sarī, who also provided him with much information for *Tafsīr*, is said to have died already in 243/857 as a man in his nineties.⁵⁸ Assuming that this date is correct, Ṭabarī's first stay in Baghdad lasted hardly more than a year, and he had gone south already in 242/856–7.

Scholars in al-Baṣrah whom Ṭabarī met during his visit there included men quoted again and again in his works. Among them were Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-A'lā al-Ṣan'ānī (d. 245/859[60]),⁵⁹ Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Ḥarashī (d. 248/862),⁶⁰ and Abū al-Ash'ath Aḥmad b. al-Miqdām (d. 253/867).⁶¹ Others, such as Abū al-Jawzā' Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān (d. 246/860), are cited less frequently.⁶²

In al-Kūfah, he encountered, among others, Ismā'il b. Mūsā al-Fazārī (d. 245/859), whom Ṭabarī considered to be a grandson of al-Suddī,⁶³ and Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥammād al-Ṭalḥī (d. 252/866), an expert in Qur'ān reading who showed himself willing to test Ṭabarī's knowledge and qualifications in the field.⁶⁴

The two men from whom he profited most in those years were Muḥammad b. Bashshār, known as Bundār (167–252/783[4]–866),⁶⁵ in al-Baṣrah, and Abū Kurayb Muḥammad b. al-'Alā' (d. in his

57. For Ḥumayd b. Maṣ'adah, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 49. He is often quoted in *Tafsīr* as well as *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 429. For Bishr, see below, translation, n. 196.

58. See above, n. 53.

59. See below, translation, n. 101.

60. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IX, 482, no. 778.

61. See below, translation, n. 970.

62. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV 206 f. He is mentioned in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1051, and *History*, I, 1147.

63. For al-Fazārī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 335 f. His relationship to al-Suddī (below, translation, n. 276) was disputed.

64. For Sulaymān al-Ṭalḥī, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 206 f.; Ibn al-Jazārī, *Ghāyah*, II, 107, and I, 314, ll. 13 f. ('*araḍa 'alayh al-imām Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī*). Ibn al-Jazārī, like al-Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā* (Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCVII), depends on al-Dānī. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 285, l. 5, and Subki, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, also mention that Ṭabarī studied Qur'ān reading with him. It is not certain that he met him in al-Kūfah. Al-Ṭalḥī is mentioned in *Tafsīr*, XVI, 61, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 19:31).

65. See below, translation, n. 44.

eighties in 247 or 248/861–2)⁶⁶ in al-Kūfah. As appears from the innumerable times that they are cited as transmitters, both Ibn Bashshār and Abū Kurayb exercised a great influence on him. Abū Kurayb was a difficult person, but Ṭabarī did not fail to mollify him from the start of their acquaintance by his extraordinary ability. When he came to his house together with other *ḥadīth* students clamoring for admission, he found the great scholar looking out of a window and asking for those who could recite from memory the traditions they had written down on his dictation. The assembled students looked at each other and then pointed to Ṭabarī as the one who would be able to do that. Abū Kurayb examined him and found him able to recite every tradition he was asked, with the exact day on which Abū Kurayb had taught it.⁶⁷

Ṭabarī probably spent less than two years traveling in southern Iraq and may have returned to Baghdad about 244/858–9. It was not until eight years later that he undertook his next major research trip that took him to Syria and Egypt. During that interval between journeys, we should possibly date his first attested gainful employment. He accepted a position as tutor to a son of the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā b. Khāqān.⁶⁸ The boy was called Abū Yaḥyā. As the story suggests, he probably was the wazīr's son by a slave girl. Since Ibn Khāqān was out of office and in exile between 248 and 253, Ṭabarī would have held his tutorial position sometime between 244/858–9 and 248/962. The report we have is introduced by the words "when Ṭabarī entered Baghdad" and could refer to his first arrival in the capital. However, a rather high salary is involved, which seems more than could have been commanded by a very young and unknown student such as Ṭabarī was when he first came to Baghdad. Moreover, the story shows Ṭabarī already firmly committed to legal ethics, which is hardly in keeping with someone seventeen years of age. Ṭabarī, we are told, had merchandise to provide for his living expenses (sent, no doubt, by his father). It was stolen, and he was in dire straits,

66. See below, translation, n. 77.

67. See *Irshād*, VI, 431, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 51. "Difficult person" renders *sharis al-khuluq*. This characterization, which fitted other scholars as well, is also used for the grammarian Tha'lab (*Irshād*, VI, 438, l. 7, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 60).

68. See *El*², III, 824a, s. v. Ibn Khāqān (2). The future wazīr was a student of Ibn Ḥanbal; see Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt*, i, 204. On another son, the wazīr al-Khāqānī, see below, n. 129.

so much so that he had to sell part of his clothing.⁶⁹ A friend of his knew that the wazīr was looking for a tutor for his son, and the friend asked Ṭabarī whether he was willing to accept the position if it was offered to him. Ṭabarī agreed, no doubt eagerly. The friend was able to arrange matters. After first providing him with the proper clothes, he introduced him to the wazīr. Ibn Khāqān gained a good impression of him. He offered him the position and agreed to pay ten dīnārs per month. In addition, he had a contract drawn up specifying the time Ṭabarī⁷⁰ was allowed to devote to study, prayer, eating, and resting, and even gave him upon his request a one-month advance. A well-equipped classroom (*hujrat al-ta'dīb*) for the boy was assigned to Ṭabarī. He instructed him in writing, and his pupil appears to have quickly learned how to write. The writing tablet that demonstrated the boy's newly acquired skill was taken by servants to his mother and the other slave girls who had borne children to their master (*ummahāt al-walad*) as proof of the good news. The overjoyed ladies filled a tray with dirhams and dīnārs and sent it with the servants back to Ṭabarī. He, however, refused to accept the money. He had, he said, a contract with the wazīr to be paid a certain sum and was not entitled to any further compensation. The matter was submitted to the wazīr who summoned him and told him that he was wrong to reject the well-meant gift of the women and had offended them by not accepting it. Ṭabarī argued that the women were slaves and legally owned no property of their own. He obviously implied that it was really the wazīr who was the source of the money and who therefore was paying more than had been agreed upon in the contract. Ṭabarī learned a lesson from this occurrence. Later on, when friends would bring him a gift of food, it was his established custom (*sunnah*) to accept it as being, in contrast to money, merely a token gift; but, prompted by his socially proper attitude (*mu-ruwwah*), he would make an appropriate return gift. This taught

69. The manuscript of Ibn 'Asākir has *k-s-y qamiṣ-h*, which was emended to *kummay*... "the long sleeves of his shirt" in Ṭabarī, *Introductio etc.*, LXXV. The correction is confirmed by Dhahabī's quotation in *Nubalā'*, XIV, 271 f. In a brief statement reported by Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 125, Ṭabarī is quoted by al-Farghānī as having said, "My father's allowance for my living expenses did not arrive on time, so that I was forced to cut off the sleeves of my shirt and sell them." Al-Subkī no doubt refers to the same event.

70. The Arabic pronoun clearly refers to Ṭabarī, and not to his young pupil.

his friends that it would be inadvisable to press gifts on him.⁷¹

Being in his late twenties, Ṭabarī was an acknowledged scholar—a “recent Ph.D.” in our parlance—when he left Baghdad for further study in the West, that is, in the countries located to the west of Iraq. His goal was Egypt, but his journey included visits to Syria and Palestine both on the way to Egypt and on a sidetrip from Egypt before his eventual return to Baghdad. Beirut was an especially important stop because it gave him the opportunity to study with al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd b. Mazyad al-‘Udhri al-Bayrūtī (ca. 169–270/785[6]–883[4]).⁷² Al-‘Abbās instructed him in the variant readings (*ḥurūf*) of the Qur’ān according to the Syrian school. Moreover, he was instrumental in conveying to him through his father al-Walīd the legal views of al-Awzā‘ī, Syria’s most prominent jurist who had died in Beirut about a century earlier.⁷³

Ṭabarī’s precise itinerary in Syria and Palestine is not known to us. Some of the places he visited can be deduced from the names of the authorities cited in his works. The scholars named Ḥimṣī, Ramlī, or ‘Asqalānī could, of course, have been in Iraq or in Egypt when Ṭabarī studied with them. However, even if it is not expressly attested that a given scholar resided in his native town at

71. See Ibn ‘Asākir, LXXV f., and Dhahabī, *Nubalā’* (above, n. 69).

72. See Ibn ‘Asākir, LXIX and LXXII; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 355, II, 107; al-Maqrizī, *Muqaffā’* (Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCVI). For al-‘Abbās and his father (who was also always the source of his traditions in *Tahdhib*, *Musnad Ibn ‘Abbās*, index, 1061), see below, translation, n. 98. Al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd’s authority is said to be Khallād b. Khālīd (d. 220/835; see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 274 f.). Ṭabarī, according to *Irshād*, VI, 427, ll. 9–12, ed. Rifā‘ī, XVIII, 45, taught Qur’ān reading—which he supposedly did rarely, and only to selected individuals—according to the tradition of ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bakkār al-Kalā‘ī. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd was also a teacher of Qur’ān readings (*ḥurūf*) to al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd; see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhib*, VI, 109; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, 355, 360. No contradiction is involved here, inasmuch as al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd transmitted material from both authorities to Ṭabarī.

In his second passage, Ibn ‘Asākir quotes a work entitled *Talkhiṣ qirā’at al-Sha’miyyīn* by a certain Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Iṣbahānī. Regrettably, the quotation is out of context: “Abū Ja’far, that is, Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, stayed in Beirut several days, spending seven nights in the main mosque until he finished the Qur’ān according to this (!) transmission, reciting it to al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd. Then, after the reading, he listened to the Book being read by al-‘Abbās. He informed him that he had thus read the Qur’ān to ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bakkār twice, and so on.”

73. For al-Awzā‘ī, see below, translation, n. 95. The *isnād* “al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd—his father—al-Awzā‘ī” occurs, for instance, in *Ikhṭilāf*, ed. Kern, 20, l. 4, etc., ed. Schacht, 148.

about the time Ṭabarī visited there, there are additional indications for their places of residence, such as, for instance, their permanent close ties to a given town, their having been visited there by contemporary students such as Ibn Abī Ḥātim al-Rāzī (ca. 240–327/854[5]–939) and his father Abū Ḥātim (195–277/810[1]–90[1]), their interconnections with other scholars of the region, their failure to be listed in *TB*, and the like.⁷⁴

Ḥimṣ (Homs, Emesa) was famous for its special tradition of *ḥadīth* transmission. Among the Ḥimṣīs who were Ṭabarī's authorities, mention may be made of 'Imrān b. Bakkār al-Kalā'ī,⁷⁵ Abū al-Jamāhir Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān,⁷⁶ a certain Abū Shuraḥbil,⁷⁷ Sulaymān b. Muḥammad b. Ma'dikarib al-Ru'aynī,⁷⁸ Muḥammad b. Ḥaḥṣ al-Waṣṣābī,⁷⁹ Sa'id b. 'Uthmān al-Tanūkhī,⁸⁰ and the outstanding representative of the Syrian *ḥadīth* school at the time, Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Tā'ī.⁸¹ Another Ḥimṣī, Sa'id b.

74. Another father-and-son team traveling in quest of knowledge among Ṭabarī's contemporaries was Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd (see below, n. 229) and his father Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath, see *TB*, IX, 464.

In connection with these pages, it is particularly regrettable that most of Ibn 'Asākir's *History of Damascus* was unavailable to me.

75. 'Imrān b. Bakkār died in 270/883–4; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 124. His family had old roots in Ḥimṣ. Ṭabarī refers to him frequently, for instance, *History*, I, 210; *Dhayl*, III, 2425, ed. Cairo, XI, 591; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1066, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 435 f.; *Tafsīr*, II, 353, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 2:238), V, 163 f. (*ad Qur.* 4:11), on *ṣalāt al-khawf*, etc. In *Aghānī*, VIII, 161 (= *Agh.* 3, IX, 273), Ṭabarī is quoted as reporting an Umayyad family tradition through him.

76. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, III, 2, 327, where Ibn Abī Ḥātim says that he studied with him in Ḥimṣ; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1054; *Tafsīr*, XIV, 15, l. 28 (*ad Qur.* 15:22). His authority in the *Tafsīr* passage, Abū Rawḥ 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Mūsā, was also a Ḥimṣī. Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī studied with Abū Rawḥ in Salamyah, see Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 2, 397.

77. See *History*, I, 1140; *Tafsīr*, XIV, 32, l. 11 (*ad Qur.* 15:75), XXI, 56, l. 27 (*ad Qur.* 31:34); *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 432.

78. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 217; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 1, 140 f.: "he died before I came to Ḥimṣ." In *Tafsīr*, XX, 53, l. 8 (*ad Qur.* 28:48), his authority is another Ḥimṣī, al-Baqiyyah b. al-Walid.

79. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, III, 2, 237. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1071; *Tafsīr*, XXVII, 108, ll. 29 f. (*ad Qur.* 56:37).

80. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 1, 47. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index 1058, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 431; *Tafsīr*, XVI, 80, l. 7 (*ad Qur.* 19:65); *Dhayl*, III, 2501, 2512, ed. Cairo, XI, 646, 655.

81. Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Awf al-Ḥimṣī died in 272–3/885–6; see below, translation, n. 56; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, IV, 1, 52 f.; Laoust, in *Mélanges Massignon*, III, 13. He appears also, for instance, in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1074, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 440 f.; *Tafsīr*, VI, 184, l. 4 (*ad Qur.* 5:54), XXIII, 17, l. 17 (*ad*

'Amr al-Sakūnī,⁸² is almost always cited by Ṭabarī together with the Ḥimṣī Baqiyyah b. al-Walid⁸³ as his authority; it is most likely that Ṭabarī's contact with him took place somewhere in Syria or Palestine, if not directly in Ḥimṣ. The same applies to Abū 'Utbah Aḥmad b. al-Faraj, although he is known to have been a frequent visitor to Baghdad.⁸⁴

Ramlis, from al-Ramlah in Palestine and presumably visited there by Ṭabarī, included Mūsā b. Sahl,⁸⁵ 'Alī b. Sahl,⁸⁶ 'Isā b. 'Uthmān b. 'Isā,⁸⁷ Ismā'il b. Isrā'il al-Sallāl,⁸⁸ al-Ḥasan b. Bilāl (who had moved from al-Baṣrah to take up residence in al-Ramlah),⁸⁹ and 'Abd al-Jabbār b. Yahyā.⁹⁰ Ayyūb b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm lived and

Qur. 36:65), XXVII, 130, ll. 7 f. (ad Qur. 57:14), *Dhayl* III, 2397, 2414, 2422 f., ed. Cairo, XI, 569, 582, 588 f.

82. See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 67 f. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 431, *Tafsīr*, III, 104, l. 31 (ad Qur. 2:286), etc.; *Dhayl*, III, 2391. ed. Cairo, XI, 565.

83. For Baqiyyah [115-97[8]/733-813], see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 473-8.

84. Ahmad b. al-Faraj died in Ḥimṣ in 271/884-5; see TB, IV, 339-41; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 67-9. See, for instance, *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1051, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 424; *Tafsīr*, IX, 80, l. 29 (ad Qur. 7:172), X, 15, l. 1 (ad Qur. 8:50), XV, 98, l. 26 (ad Qur. 17:79, on *maqāman mahmūdān*), XXII, 23, l. 14 (ad Qur. 35:36 f.), XXVII, 4, l. 16 (ad Qur. 51:41).

85. See below, translation, n. 232; Ibn Abī Ḥātim, IV, 1, 146. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1076; *Tafsīr*, V, 120, l. 9 (ad Qur. 4:86), XIII, 114, l. 30 (ad Qur. 13:39), XVI, 142, l. 22 (ad Qur. 20:73); *Ṣariḥ*, 195 f.

86. See below, translation, n. 45. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1064, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 434; *Tafsīr*, XVI, 29, ll. 22 f. (ad Qur. 18:107), XVIII, 54, l. 13 (ad Qur. 24:2), XXVII, 142, l. 2 (ad Qur. 57:28); *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, 146; *Ṣariḥ*, 198; *Dhayl*, III, 2369, 2490, 2492, ed. Cairo, XI, 549, 638 f. Although he was a Ramlī and transmitted from Ramlis, it is not certain that Ṭabarī met him in his hometown.

87. According to Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, VIII, 220, 'Isā b. 'Uthmān died in 251/865. The date, if correct (which may not be the case), would mean that Ṭabarī could not have met him in al-Ramlah but presumably met him earlier in Baghdad. 'Isā b. 'Uthmān's chief authority, his uncle Yahyā b. 'Isā (d. 201/816[7]), was a well-known Ramlī. See, for instance, *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1066, *Musnad 'Alī*, index, 436; *Tafsīr*, II, 84, l. 31 (ad Qur. 2:184), VI, 87, l. 15 (ad Qur. 5:6), VII, 168, l. 11 (ad Qur. 6:82), VIII, 71, l. 17 (ad Qur. 6:158), X, 51, l. 4 (ad Qur. 9:3), XIV, 42, l. 25 (ad Qur. 15:90 f.), XVII, 80, l. 33, 82, l. 7 (ad Qur. 21:105), XIX, 26, l. 28 (ad Qur. 25:68), XX, 51, l. 21 (ad Qur. 28:46), XXI, 43, l. 23 (ad Qur. 31:12), XXVII, 50, l. 28 (ad Qur. 54:1).

88. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, I, 1, 158. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has al-Sallāl, whereas *Tafsīr* has al-La'al (?); see VII, 63, l. 6 (ad Qur. 5:105), XXVII, 78, l. 33 (ad Qur. 55:29). A Muḥammad b. Ismā'il b. Isrā'il al-Dallāl occurs *Tafsīr*, V, 144, ll. 25 f. (ad Qur. 4:97). Read Abū Muḥammad Ismā'il... (?).

89. See below, translation, n. 601.

90. See *Tafsīr*, IV, 8, l. 16 (ad Qur. 3:96), XIII, 65, l. 7, 68, l. 14 (ad Qur. 13:4), XVIII, 3, l. 18 (ad Qur. 23:1 f.), XX, 24, l. 5 (ad Qur. 28:10). His authority was Ḍamrah b.

taught in Baghdad and Egypt in addition to al-Ramlah, and he died in Baghdad in the 250s or 260s (ca. 865–82); thus, we cannot be quite sure where Ṭabarī studied with him.⁹¹

ʿAsqalānīs are represented by Muḥammad b. Khalaf,⁹² ʿUbayd b. Ādam b. Abī Iyās,⁹³ and ʿIṣām b. Rawwād b. al-Jarrāh.⁹⁴ It may have been in Jerusalem that Ṭabarī met ʿUbaydallāh b. Muḥammad al-Firyābī.⁹⁵ Ibrāhīm b. Yaʿqūb al-Jūzajānī died between 256/870 and 259/872–3 in Syria, probably in Damascus, and Ṭabarī may have studied with him there a few years earlier. He is described as the leader of the anti-ʿAlid faction in Syria. In the course of time, he was mistakenly identified as a follower of Ṭabarī's legal school, as his *nisbah* Ḥarīzī was misread Jarīrī; this error caused later Muslim historians to exercise their critical acumen.⁹⁶

The individuals mentioned, numerous as they are, do not exhaust the list of those who were Ṭabarī's informants during his stay in Syria and Palestine. In many cases, we know quite little about them, but they all enjoyed great esteem as scholars in their time. Their number is a good illustration of the intensity with which scholars such as Ṭabarī (but, of course, not only he)

Rabīʿah al-Filastīnī al-Ramlī (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 460).

91. See TB, VII, 9 f. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ʿAbbās*, index, 1052, *Musnad ʿAlī*, index, 426; *Tafsīr*, X, 128, l. 11 (*ad Qur.* 9:74).

92. See below, translation, n. 621; Ibn Abī Hātim, III, 2, 245. Cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ʿAbbās*, index, 1071, *Musnad ʿAlī*, index, 439; *Tafsīr*, V, 80, l. 23 (*ad Qur.* 4:48) and elsewhere; *Dhayl*, III, 2379, 2414, 2515, ed. Cairo, XI, 557, 582, 657.

93. ʿUbayd b. Ādam died in 258/872; see below, translation, n. 221. His father, a prominent scholar of Marwan origin, was born in Baghdad and died in ʿAsqalān; see Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 268. Cited in *Tafsīr*, XXI, 39, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 31:6); *Dhayl*, III, 2424, ed. Cairo, XI, 590.

94. See Ibn Abī Hātim, III, 2, 26; and, for his father Rawwād, I, 2, 524. Cited in *Tafsīr*, III, 54, l. 29, 55, l. 26, 56, ll. 24 ff. (*ad Qur.* 2:267), XVII, 69, l. 17 (*ad Qur.* 21:96), XVIII, 20, l. 13 (*ad Qur.* 23:50), XX, II, l. 5 (*ad Qur.* 27:82), XXII, 72, l. 23 (*ad Qur.* 34:51).

95. Ibn Abī Hātim, II, 2, 335, states that al-Firyābī resided in Jerusalem and that his father studied with him. One of his authorities was Ḍamrah b. Rabīʿah (above, n. 90). Al-Firyābī appears in *Tafsīr*, VII, 193, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 6:98), IX, 143, l. 9 (*ad Qur.* 8:24), XV, 148, l. 14 (*ad Qur.* 18:19), XXI, 20, l. 1 (*ad Qur.* 30:15); *Ṣariḥ*, 196.

96. See Ibn Abī Hātim, I, 1, 148 f.; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, I, 75 f.; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 181–3; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, II, 149 f.; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 278. He is cited in *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn ʿAbbās*, index, 1050, *Musnad ʿAlī*, index, 424; *Tafsīr*, XII, 24, l. 3 (*ad Qur.* 11:38), XIV, 197, l. 25 (*ad Qur.* 16:88), XVI, 161, l. 4 (*ad Qur.* 20:115). He may be meant in *Ṣariḥ*, 196, where Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Jūzajānī is mentioned (?).

pursued their "quest of knowledge."

The year Ṭabarī came to Egypt is indicated in one passage as 253/867, and in another as 256/870.⁹⁷ It is tempting to consider the former date as referring to his first arrival in the country, and the second as the date of his return after the excursion to Syria and Palestine. This may have been so, in particular, since both dates appear to go back to one authority, Ibn Kāmil. The context in which the dates are embedded seems to confirm the first date as quite certain. It depicts Ṭabarī as comparatively unknown when he reached Egypt, and willing to have his scholarly competence tested by someone about his own age, a certain Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Sirāj. In this connection, Ibn Sirāj is rather strangely described as a sort of arbiter of the Egyptian intellectual establishment whose word was taken as the ultimate endorsement of someone's standing as a scholar and man of general culture.⁹⁸ The second date, 256/870, is connected with an anecdote that shows Ṭabarī as a newcomer unfamiliar with life in Egypt and indicates a great scholar as his host. Taking all these small indicia into account, it seems that while the year 253 can be taken as correctly dating his first arrival in Egypt, the date of 256 for his return visit to the country is much less certain.

Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā (170-264/787-877)⁹⁹ was Egypt's leading scholar in the fields of *ḥadīth* and Qur'ān reading. Ṭabarī profited from Ibn 'Abd al-A'lā's knowledge in these disciplines, as he certainly did from other competent Egyptian scholars. But no doubt the greatest boon which Ṭabarī reaped from his sojourn in Egypt was an increased understanding of the legal systems of Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī. His host, al-Rabī' b. Sulaymān (174-270/790[1]-884),¹⁰⁰ who welcomed him to Egypt and who made a living as muezzin of

97. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, l. 7, and 434, l. 4, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 52 and 55. Ibn 'Asākir, LXXII, quoting Ibn Yūnus, *Ghurabā'*, has 263. This is no doubt a mistake (in the Ibn 'Asākir manuscript?) and should be corrected to 253.

98. Since Ibn Sirāj is supposed to have died in 308/920, shortly before Ṭabarī's death, he could at best have been ten years older. See *TB*, XI, 431-3 (where he is described as a resident of Baghdad); Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 283; Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, II, 252. The wrong date of death (358/968[9]) appears in Dhahabī, *Mizān*, III, 131, and Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, IV, 320 f. The information we have about him does not support the role he is assigned in connection with Ṭabarī's stay in Egypt.

99. See, for instance, below, translation, n. 220; *Dhayl*, III, 2372, ed. Cairo, XI, 551, and elsewhere; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 406 f.; Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, II, 170-80.

100. See below, translation, n. 736.

the Mosque of 'Amr, had been connected with al-Shāfi'ī and was a transmitter of his works. It is very likely that Ṭabarī also met the other leading exponent of Shāfi'ism, al-Muzanī (175-264/791[2]-878), and discussed with him matters such as general consensus (*ijmā'*), which came to constitute an important element in Ṭabarī's legal thought; his biographers, however, do not seem to have been quite clear about whether there was a meeting and what was discussed at it.¹⁰¹

Among his many contacts in Egypt, the most important was probably the one with the eminent Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam family.¹⁰² Its members had been intimately connected with the imām al-Shāfi'ī, next to whose grave they found their final resting places.¹⁰³ They also were outstanding representatives of Mālik's legal school. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Hakam, who headed the family in those years,¹⁰⁴ attracted scholars from all over the world to come and study with him. He had the distinction of being both a student of al-Shāfi'ī and a Mālikite jurist, and he possessed the reputation of being the outstanding expert on law and *ḥadīth* among contemporary Egyptians.¹⁰⁵ Years before, he had traveled to Baghdad in connection with the infamous inquisition concerning the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. Like Ibn Ḥanbal, he had shown himself to be a stout defender of its uncreatedness. We do not know whether he ever went back to Baghdad in his later years, but this is highly unlikely. His brother 'Abd al-Raḥmān is best known as a historian. He contributed information to the *History* as well as *Tahdhīb* and *Tafsīr*.¹⁰⁶ A third brother, Sa'd, did not do much, if any, publishing. He is known to have taught in Mecca for some time, presumably in connection with his pilgrimage, but this seems to have been a brief interlude

101. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, l. 16, 433, ll. 15, 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 53 f., and below, 67 f. For al-Muzanī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 492 f. Ṭabarī's friend Ibn Khuzaymah, who was in Egypt at the same time, studied with al-Muzanī, see Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, II, 93.

102. See *EP*², III, 674 f., s. v. Ibn 'Abd al-Hakam.

103. See *Irshād*, VI, 395, ed. Rifā'i, XVII, 323, in the biography of al-Shāfi'ī.

104. See below, translation, n. 93. He is mentioned often (I have noted more than twenty-five references) in *Tafsīr*, where his authorities are his father and other Egyptian scholars. See also *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1072.

105. See Ibn Taghribirdi, *Nujūm*, III, 44.

106. See below, translation, n. 712. As he was to die in 257/871, Ṭabarī may have still been in Egypt at the time of his death.

in his teaching career in Egypt.¹⁰⁷ It was no doubt in Egypt that Ṭabarī received from him the information which he incorporated in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*.¹⁰⁸

We hear little about Ṭabarī's contemporaries who were his friends rather than merely colleagues or teachers. This makes an anecdote concerning his experiences in Egypt valuable as a source of information, even if it is of doubtful historicity. Four scholars, all named Muḥammad, were together in Egypt when they ran out of money and had to go hungry. The four Muḥammads were, in addition to Ṭabarī, Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Hārūn al-Rūyānī (from Ṭabaristān), and Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Khuzaymah al-Nisābūrī—all, it may be noted, men of Persian origin. They cast lots in order to determine who would go out and beg for food. Ibn Khuzaymah was chosen, but before he could leave, a messenger from the governor (? wālī) of al-Fuṣṭāṭ came with fifty dinārs for each of the four. The governor was sending them the money because he had just had a dream about hungry Muḥammads and, pious as he was, wished to alleviate their plight.¹⁰⁹ There is much

107. See Ibn Abī Ḥātim, II, 1, 92.

108. His transmission in *Tafsīr* (and, with one exception, in *Tahdhīb*) is always on the authority of Ḥafs b. 'Umar or Abū Zur'ah Wahballāh b. Rāshid. See *Dhayl*, III, 2391, ed. Cairo, XI, 565, and elsewhere; *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, index, 1058; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 24, l. 14; *Tafsīr*, VIII, 102, l. 25 [ad Qur. 7:17], XII, 79, l. 30, 86, l. 34 [ad Qur. 11:114, 118], XV, 166, l. 4 [ad Qur. 18:46], XVIII, 96, l. 29 [ad Qur. 24:31], XX, 16, l. 12 [ad Qur. 27:90], XXII, 38, l. 6 [ad Qur. 33:70 f.], XXIV, 60, l. 16 [ad Qur. 41:6 f.].

The reference to a certain Yūnus b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam in *Tafsīr*, VII, 199, l. 18 [ad Qur. 6:103] is apparently a mistake. The source of Yūnus there, Khālīd b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, is listed as an authority of Muḥammad and Sa'd (b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abd al-Ḥakam; see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 103).

109. See *TB*, II, 164 f., Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIV f., *Irshād*, VI, 427 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 46 f.; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 250 f. Yāqūt states that he did not use *TB* for this story, but the work of al-Sam'ānī, however, Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 40 ff., does not contain it. For al-Marwazī (202–94/817[8]–906[7]), see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 494; for al-Rūyānī [d. 307/919[20]], see *GAS*, I, 171; and for Ibn Khuzaymah, see *GAS*, I, 601. In a different context, Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 102, speaks of "four Muḥammads." Al-Rūyānī is replaced by Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mundhir al-Nisābūrī, who, according to Subkī, died in 309 or 310/921–2, but possibly a few years later; see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 495 f. The existence of a motif of "four Muḥammads" casts further doubt on the historicity of the story. The large amount of money involved and the premise of extreme financial hardship experienced by scholars as well-connected and welcomed to Egypt as Ṭabarī is described as having been make it appear a legend. It was, however, a common occurrence for traveling students to run out of money,

in the story that hardly permits it to be taken literally. Its basic assumption, however, appears to be factual. The four had come to Egypt on research trips and knew each other and probably roomed together. Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Marwazī was about twenty years older than the other three and was clearly an established scholar and jurist in his fifties. Although already esteemed as scholars, the others fell hardly into the same category, being in their late twenties or early thirties. Among them, Ibn Khuzaymah, born a year earlier than Ṭabarī and outliving him by one year, qualified well as a personal friend. His path may have crossed with that of Ṭabarī before, as he had studied with the same teachers, such as Ibn Bashshār and Bishr b. Mu'ādh in al-Basrah and Abū Kurayb and Ismā'il b. Mūsā al-Fazārī in al-Kūfah.¹¹⁰ Ibn Khuzaymah became a very productive scholar in the same fields as Ṭabarī. He spent his life in his hometown of Nisābūr; but he showed lasting loyalty to his former fellow student. On every possible occasion, he strongly defended Ṭabarī against Ḥanbalite attacks, and he missed no opportunity to praise his scholarship. A student returning from Baghdad who reported that he had not dared to study with Ṭabarī because of a Ḥanbalite boycott was told by Ibn Khuzaymah that he would have profited more from attending a lecture of Ṭabarī than he did from all his study with the other teachers in Baghdad.¹¹¹ And when Ibn Khuzaymah found out that a certain Ibn Bālawayh had written down the entire *Tafsīr* on Ṭabarī's dictation between 283/896 and 290/903, he asked him to lend him his copy. He returned it after a long time¹¹² with the comment: "I perused it from beginning to end. I know of nobody upon the face of the earth who is more learned than Muḥammad b. Jarīr. He has been wronged by the Ḥanbalites."¹¹³ This is as much in-

even if, as in the case of Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, they were sons of prominent scholars; see *TB*, IX, 466 f.

110. Ibn Khuzaymah also studied with Ahmad b. Manī' in Baghdad. Ibn Manī' was an authority of Ṭabarī in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*. As he died in his eighties in 244/859 (see *TB*, V, 160 f.), Ṭabarī might have met Ibn Khuzaymah in his early period in Baghdad. Ibn Khuzaymah further studied with Ṭulayq b. Muḥammad al-Wāsiṭī in al-Basrah (see Ibn Khuzaymah, 179). Ṭulayq also occurs in *Tafsīr* and *Tahdhīb*, but his date of death is not known.

111. See *TB*, V, 164; Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVIII, Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 272.

112. The proposed reading "two years" in Ibn 'Asākir, as against the attested "several years," may or may not be correct.

113. See above, n. 111, and *Irshād*, VI, 425, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 42 f. Ibn Khuzay-

formation about a lifelong friendship between fellow students as we can expect to gather from sources that usually tended to disregard personal aspects of scholarship.

His Fifty Years of Scholarly Activity in Baghdad

The person

It is not known how much time Ṭabarī spent in Egypt after 256/870 before returning to Baghdad.^{113a} It is tempting to assume that during his western journey, and before his return, he performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, either during his sidetrip to Syria and Palestine or on the way back to Baghdad. The date of 256/870, which appears in the *Story of the Belt* (see below, 99), seems to be more than just a lucky guess and may well have preserved a true fact from Ṭabarī's biography. Scholarly pilgrims often remained in the Sacred Territory for considerable periods of time. However, since nothing is known about his having studied with resident scholars in the Ḥijāz,¹¹⁴ any time he might have spent there for the performance of the pilgrimage would not have been very long.

With his return to Baghdad, his formal education was completed and his student days were over. The time had come for him to devote himself entirely to teaching and publication. The tremen-

mah shared Ṭabarī's negative view of Ibn Ḥanbal as a jurist. A young scholar, who later became famous, Abū Bakr al-Qaffāl [291-365/903[4]-975[6], see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 497 f.), visited Ibn Khuzaymah and told him that he was on his way to study with a Ḥanbalite jurist, whereupon Ibn Khuzaymah exclaimed: "Say, a Shāfi'ite, for Ahmad b. Ḥanbal was just one of al-Shāfi'i's young men." See *Irshād*, VI, 379, ed. Rifā'i, XVII, 298, in the biography of al-Shāfi'i. Al-Qaffāl is said to have studied with Ṭabarī, see Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, IV, 112, l. 16; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 201, l. 1. This must have been in the last years of the lives of Ṭabarī and Ibn Khuzaymah, when al-Qaffāl was still in his teens.

Only the last two sentences of Ibn Khuzaymah's statement appear in Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 42; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 16 f.

113a. Ferré, "Vic de Jesus," 8, is convinced that Ṭabarī returned in 258/871[2].

114. The statement of Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 41, l. 1, that Ṭabarī's travels took him to the Ḥijāz, seems to be offhand and cannot be relied on. A reference to the various nationalities of his teachers makes no mention of the Ḥijāz; see *TB*, II, 165, ll. 5 f., quoted in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIII, l. 3; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 170, l. 21. I have so far not succeeded in identifying any authority of Ṭabarī whom he could have met only in Mecca and Medina. See also below, n. 344a.

dous volume of work he accomplished evoked the admiration of his contemporaries as well as later generations. Some attempts at quantification were undertaken. Necessarily they were crude. In his continuation of Ṭabarī's *History*, al-Farghānī stated that some unnamed disciples of Ṭabarī had figured out that if one took the number of folios of his works and divided it by the number of days from his puberty to his death at the age of eighty-six, one would find that he wrote fourteen (!) folios every single day (which would amount to roughly 350,000 folios).¹¹⁵ And the grammarian 'Alī b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Simsimī (d. 415/1024) told his student, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, that Ṭabarī used to write forty (!) folios each day for forty years (which rather shortens the time of his publishing career for the sake of round figures).¹¹⁶ Such statistics were of course not needed to convince anyone that Ṭabarī was unusually prolific in an age that boasted of many prolific authors.

Productivity on such a scale required not only a rarely gifted type of personality but also the existence of material conditions that were conducive to sustained work. Before discussing Ṭabarī's scholarship, it might be well to pause and review what is known of his life as a mature individual in the complex and sophisticated society of a large Muslim city.

Apparently soon after his return to Baghdad, although the only date we have indicates that it was after 290/903, he took up residence in East Baghdad's Shammāsiyyah district to live there until he died.¹¹⁷ It was, we are told, a neighborhood which had been home to many grammarians in the past.¹¹⁸ His house was located at the Baradān Bridge.¹¹⁹ It presumably was identical with the house in Ya'qūb Square, in which he is said to have died and which is described as being in the neighborhood of the Khurāsān Gate—not, of course, the Khurāsān Gate in the Round City but the one through which the Khurāsān Road leaves al-Shammāsiyyah

115. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44.

116. See *TB*, II, 163, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVII. For al-Simsimī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 184.

117. See *Irshād*, VI, 435, ll. 3 f., 438, ll. 11 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 56, 60 f.

118. For the grammarians mentioned in this connection, see below, 107.

119. Marked no. 53 on map V in Le Strange, *Baghdad*. The map is reproduced in Lassner, *Topography*, 203.

and the city.¹²⁰ Ya'qūb Square is not listed in the topographical descriptions of Baghdad, but Baradān Bridge and Khurāsān Road might easily have been used for indicating the same location. Ṭabarī's mosque—that is, the neighborhood mosque where he regularly worshiped—was situated at some distance from his house in Sūq al-'Aṭash (presumably, "Thirst Bazaar") of the adjacent Mukharrim district. It is mentioned in a report by Abū 'Alī al-Ṭūmārī.¹²¹ One night during the last third of the month of Ramaḍān, al-Ṭūmārī served as lantern (*qindīl*) bearer for Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid when he headed toward his mosque for the nightly services (*tarāwīḥ*). Ibn Mujāhid passed his mosque and went on to the mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash, where Ṭabarī could be heard reciting sūrah 55 (al-Raḥmān). To the question of the astonished al-Ṭūmārī of why he was keeping the people in his mosque waiting for him while he listened to the Qur'ān recitation of someone else in another mosque, Ibn Mujāhid replied that he did not think that there was any other human being in the world who could read the Qur'ān as well as Ṭabarī.¹²² House and mosque no doubt circumscribed much of Ṭabarī's daily life. At home, he did his research and writing. He taught, it seems, mainly in his mosque.

Ṭabarī appears never to have married. A Spanish scholar, Maslamah b. (al-)Qāsim al-Qurṭubī (d. 353/964) traveled in the Near East in the decade after Ṭabarī's death, when he was in his twenties. Probably in his *Ṣilah*, a biographical dictionary, he has the following information, evidently obtained from someone who knew Ṭabarī: "He was celibate (*ḥaṣūr*) and did not know women.

120. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 172; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 282. The Khurāsān Gate is marked no. 58 on map V, and no. 17 on Le Strange's map VIII. See also Lassner, *Topography*, 263, n. 13. A Ya'qūb Road (*darb*) is mentioned in the biography of Aḥmad b. 'Alī (Ibn) al-Bādā (see below, 100) in *TB*, IV, 322.

121. Abū 'Alī 'Isā b. Mūsā b. Aḥmad al-Ṭūmārī was born in 262/875 and died in 360/970, see *TB*, XI, 176 f. Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-'Abbās b. Mujāhid, the great authority on Qur'ān reading, was born in 245/859 and died in 324/936. He was born and buried in Sūq al-'Aṭash, more precisely, near al-Khursī (al-Ḥarashī) Square (*TB*, V, 145, 1. 7). See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 31; *TB* V, 144–8; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 14; Shawqī Dayf's introduction to his edition of Ibn Mujāhid's *Sab'ah*, and also below, 67 and nn. 293, 337.

122. See *TB*, II, 164, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXV.

The approximate location of Sūq al-'Aṭash is marked no. 66 on map V of Le Strange.

Ṭabarī's reputation for excellence in Qur'ān reading and recitation was well-attested; see below, n. 337.

In (2)36, when he was twelve, he left his town to travel in quest of knowledge. He never ceased to pursue knowledge eagerly until he died."¹²³ There is no reason to doubt this information, even if there is little to either confirm or refute it. He was not married when he went to Egypt. This we learn from one of those innocent dialect jokes, so greatly enjoyed by Egyptians, that was played on him when he came there. He was looking for furniture for his domicile and was told to buy certain necessary items, including, among other puzzling objects, something as strange as "two donkeys." He replied that not only had he no use for two donkeys and the other things mentioned to him, but his stipend did not allow such heavy expenditures and should not be wasted on something that was of no value for his studies. It turned out that the entire purchase did not cost more than two and one-third dirhams, a very affordable small sum. The "two donkeys" in reality referred to a wooden bed frame, with a mattress of woven palm leaves (*sud-dah*). The raised bed was needed for protection against vermin which bothered those who had to sleep on the ground; fleas in the clothes, in particular, were a terrible plague, and clothes had to be hung up before going to bed. The Egyptians had mentioned a *zīr* as a needed item. To Ṭabarī, *zīr* recalled something connected with music, and piety forbade him to have anything to do with it. In fact, it meant a receptacle for water. And the *qaṣriyyah* which they considered indispensable was a bread bowl. Ṭabarī apparently had understood *qaṣriyyah* in its ordinary meaning of (chamber) pot, and possibly he thought of small children whom he did not have or expected, for he indignantly exclaimed that he "had not let down his pants for either a forbidden or a permitted (sexual activity)."¹²⁴ It was not unusual for an ambitious young scholar under thirty to stay unmarried for a while. Ibn Hanbal, for instance, got married only after he had passed forty.¹²⁵ Thus, the one apparently true element in the amusing story—that is, that Ṭabarī was not married during his visit to Egypt—gives no indication of what was the situation later in his life.

There is, however, a possible reference to a son of his from his

123. See Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, V, 102. For Maslamah, see Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, VI, 35 f.; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 437, n. 2.

124. See *Irshād*, VI, 434, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 55 f.

125. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 373.

old age. It is an incidental remark in another anecdote illustrating Ṭabari's scrupulousness with respect to gifts. A certain Abū al-Faraj b. Abī al-'Abbās al-Iṣfahānī al-Kātib was studying ("reading") Ṭabari's works with him. He found out that Ṭabari was interested in a mat for a small sofa,¹²⁶ so he went and took the measurements of the sofa and had a mat made that fitted it. He thought that a small gift of the sort would endear him to his revered teacher. He put it in its place and presented it to him, but "when he left, he called his son and gave him four dīnārs"—quite a large sum—"but he did not want to take them and Ṭabari wanted to accept the mat only if (his counter-gift of four dīnārs was accepted)."¹²⁷ This intentionally literal translation seems to imply that it was Ṭabari's son to whom his father gave the money to act as messenger, but this

126. For *ṣuffah*, see, for instance, Sadan, *Mobilier*, 124 n.

127. See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 87. It seems an open question whether this Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī can be identified with the famous author of *Aghānī*. The latter was born in 284/897 and began his scholarly studies at an early age. If the year of his birth is correctly stated, he could have had a child old enough near the end of Ṭabari's life to play the role indicated in the story. Abū al-Faraj often mentions Ṭabari as his authority for historical information in *Aghānī* as well as *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. He indicates that Ṭabari "told" him a certain story or that he "read" it in his presence. Once he states that Ṭabari told him a story "from memory" (*Aghānī*, IV, 138, *Agh.*³, V, 28). Some of his Ṭabari quotations cannot be traced in *History*. He may not have derived all of them from Ṭabari *viva voce* or may not accurately have remembered what he had learned; and, on occasion, he may have used Ṭabari's published work in order to supplement his information. However, the basic fact that he studied with Ṭabari cannot be denied. His contact with Ṭabari may have fallen any time after 299/911–2 when Ṭabari can be assumed to have lectured on his *History* in preparation for its forthcoming publication.

In his magisterial biography of Abū al-Faraj, 108, Muḥammad A. Khalafallah mentions the story but does not comment on the identity of the Abū al-Faraj mentioned in it, evidently, because he ruled out the possibility that he could be the author of *Aghānī*. In fact, the patronymic of his father (here Abū al-'Abbās) is, it seems, not attested anywhere. In contrast to other family members of the famous litterateur, his father remained completely in the shadows; he may have died young and left no record of any noteworthy activities. Still, our lack of knowledge about his *kunya* is no decisive argument against the identification. For the lively discussion about the dates of birth and death of the author of *Aghānī*, see Khalafallah's work and the introduction by Salāh al-dīn al-Munajjid of his edition of Abū al-Faraj's *Adab al-ghurabā'*. On p. 88 of the edition, Abū al-Faraj indicates that he was still alive in 362; this year gives a *terminus post quem* for his death. To add to the confusion, a story placed by him in the time of his youth is dated in the late 350s. While this may seem to cast doubt on the indicated date of his birth, it would seem that he cannot have been born much later and could have had a son able to walk in Ṭabari's lifetime. See also *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, I, 282 f., s. v. Abu'l-Faraj Iṣfahānī.

is not certain. It could be the donor's son to whom Ṭabarī gave the money for handing over to his father, who then refused acceptance. Thus, the evidence for a son of Ṭabarī (possibly the son of a slave girl) remains inconclusive. His *kunyah* Abū Ja'far, of course, does not require the existence of a son called Ja'far. If he had surviving children, our sources might very well have had occasion to mention them. As it is, the evidence clearly favors the assumption that Ṭabarī never married throughout his life.

His financial status was no impediment to founding a family. Scholars less fortunately situated often saw having many children as detrimental to their scholarly activities. Ṭabarī, as we have seen, had a private income, and all the opportunities for a religious scholar with the right connections to earn money were open to him. He had no difficulty in his youth finding a position as tutor to the son of a high official.¹²⁸ But he apparently never accepted a position in the government or, as would have been natural for him, in the judiciary. There is an anecdote that reflects his attitude toward official employment. It fits Ṭabarī's personal situation; therefore, it is presumably not just another illustration of the common motif that scholars ought to be reluctant to enter public service. When al-Khāqānī, the son of his former employer just referred to, was appointed to the wazirate in 299/312,¹²⁹ he sent him a large sum of money as a gift. Ṭabarī refused to accept it. The new wazīr then offered him a judgeship, only to meet with another refusal, and then a third refusal when he offered to appoint him to the *mazālim* jurisdiction.¹³⁰ His friends and students urged him to accept the *mazālim* position, since it was in need of the prestige of a renowned jurist at the head of it. He angrily rebuked them and said that they more than anybody else should not encourage him to accept the position but rather discourage him from accepting it.¹³¹ The determining element in his attitude was not, it seems, a general objection to service in government and the judiciary but his total immersion in scholarly activity. The students

128. See above, 16 ff.

129. See *ET*², III, 824, s. v. Ibn Khākān (3). We have no information on his personal relations with his (half-)brother Abū Yahyā.

130. The *mazālim* court dealt with cases outside the competence of the qāḍis of the shari'ah jurisdiction.

131. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXV; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 275. The source was al-Farghānī.

should have recognized the importance for themselves of having him available for teaching unencumbered by official duties. The thought of an office as a sinecure would, of course, not have occurred to someone like Ṭabarī.

Teaching could have been a source of income for him. He hardly belonged to those who refused compensation for all teaching as a matter of unbending principle. The number of students who attended his lectures seems to have varied greatly. There were very many at certain times, and a few carefully selected ones at others. The former was probably the rule. Especially in his later years, young students flocked to him to hear the famous man and to be able to say that they had studied with him.¹³² He probably neither wanted nor needed to derive any appreciable income from his students. Another potential source of income was legal advice of some kind or other. The only reported instance of such activity, solicited by the government of al-Muktafī, tells of a gift in lieu of a fee and rather relates to the stories of stipends and gifts which in his later years appear to have been showered upon him and which frequently involved substantial sums. As stated before, those stories were meant to be illustrative of Ṭabarī's attitude toward the giving of gifts and the legal and moral propriety of accepting them.¹³³

In the case of al-Muktafī, protocol required that the Caliph deal not personally with Ṭabarī. Al-Muktafī told his wazīr, al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan,¹³⁴ that he wished to hear Ṭabarī's views on a planned endowment, so that it would be set up in a way that could not be contested. A meeting was arranged to be conducted by two officials,

132. See, for instance, al-Qaffāl, above, n. 113. Many who claimed to have studied with Ṭabarī are known to have died in the second half of the fourth century and thus were probably born not much before 290. Yāqūt mentions 'Alī (b. Muḥammad) b. 'Allān al-Harrānī, who died in 355/966 (*Mu'jam*, II, 232), Sahl (Suhayl) b. Aḥmad b. Sahl al-Riwandī, who died as early as 350/961-2 (*Mu'jam*, II, 891), and Abū Bakr Yūsuf b. al-Qāsim b. Yūsuf al-Mayānājī, who supposedly died as late as 375/end of 985 (*Mu'jam*, IV, 708). Like Ibrāhīm b. Aḥmad al-Mimadhi (*Mu'jam*, IV, 718), for whom no dates are available, all these men are rarely mentioned in the sources, and nothing is known about their relationship, if any, to Ṭabarī.

133. See above, n. 38.

134. Al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan was al-Muktafī's wazīr from 291/904 to the caliph's death four years later; see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 149, 189. On his sponsorship of Ṭabarī's *Khafīf*, see below, 112.

Ṣāfi al-Ḥuramī (d. 298/911) and Ibn al-Ḥawārī (d. 311/923).¹³⁵ The Caliph listened from behind the curtain to Ṭabarī's lengthy disquisition on the subject at hand, and when Ṭabarī was on the point of leaving, he had a splendid gift brought out and presented to him. Ṭabarī did not want to accept it, but the two officials warned him that this was unseemly behavior. A caliphal gift was not to be rejected. It was customary to reward those who had rendered a service to a caliph with presents or the fulfilment of a wish expressed by them. The idea of expressing a wish appealed to Ṭabarī since, presumably depending on the nature of the wish, it was unobjectionable. Ṭabarī's wish was that the police be ordered to see to it that petitioners not be admitted to the prayer enclosure (*maqṣūrah*) in the mosque until the Friday sermon was finished, so that there was no disturbance and interruption of it. The wish was fulfilled, and Ṭabarī gained great admiration all around.¹³⁶ For Ṭabarī, the acceptance of a gift was conditioned upon the recipient's making, or at least having the ability to make, a countergift of equivalent or greater value. As an aspiring politician, Abū al-Hayjā', the founder of the Ḥamdānid dynasty, sent Ṭabarī a gift of three thousand dīnārs. Ṭabarī refused to accept the magnificent present on the ground that he could not afford a return gift of similar value. He was confronted with the argument that no countergift was required in this case, since Abū al-Hayjā' meant his gift to be a good deed that was pleasing to God and would secure for him a heavenly reward (*al-taqarrub ilā allāh*). It proved of no avail.¹³⁷ We cannot help feeling that under the circumstances, the gift may have had some political purpose, such as obligating Ṭabarī to the donor and assuring support for him in the legal community and civilian administration. Ṭabarī may have sensed that and, therefore, shied away from a gift which could become embarrassing at some time in the future.

The same Khāqānī who had offered Ṭabarī a high position in the judiciary made Ṭabarī a present of pomegranates at some other time. Ṭabarī accepted the pomegranates and distributed them

135. For Ṣāfi, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 103, n. 516. For Ibn al-Ḥawārī, see 'Arib, 113; Hamadhānī, *Takmilah*, 42; Miskawayh, in *Eclipse*, index, Bowen, index, s. v. Ibn al-Ḥawwārī.

136. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVI; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 270, from al-Farghānī.

137. See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 87, For Abū al-Hayjā', see *ET*², III, 126 f., s. v. Ḥamdānids.

among his neighbors. Hearing about it, al-Khāqānī, either because he was touched by Ṭabarī's generous spirit or because he thought that his gift was considered too insignificant, sent Ṭabarī a basket with a purse which was filled with ten thousand dirhams. An accompanying note asked Ṭabarī either to accept the money for himself or distribute it among deserving friends, as he had done with the pomegranates. The messenger was probably unaware of the contents of al-Khāqānī's note, but as it came from a high-ranking personality, he thought that it was important, and he insisted upon being admitted into Ṭabarī's house. He was not aware or did not care that he was disturbing Ṭabarī during hours that he was reserving for writing and during which he had given strict orders that nobody was to bother him. Ṭabarī read the note and told the messenger that it was alright to accept the gift of pomegranates, but he could not accept the money. When it was pointed out to him that he was given the option of distributing the money among his needy friends (*aṣḥāb*), he remained unpersuaded and replied that the wazīr himself should distribute the money since he knew better who needed money and could make the best use of it.¹³⁸ A very similar remark is ascribed to Ṭabarī on another occasion.¹³⁹

Ṭabarī had good relations with humbler folks in the neighborhood, where he was certainly looked up to as one of its most distinguished residents. When a neighbor called Abū al-Muḥassin al-Muḥarrir (thus, presumably, a professional scribe) made him a present of two chickens, he gave him a garment in return, something obviously more expensive,¹⁴⁰ thereby following the principles that governed his attitude toward gifts. In spite of his eminence, Ṭabarī was in general easy for his neighbors, be they scholars or ordinary people, to get along with. He went with them on picnics¹⁴¹ and gave them advice for their children.¹⁴²

Certain remarkable traits and attitudes that guided his daily life apart from his scholarly pursuits were fortunately recorded for posterity. His physical appearance showed a darkish brown

¹³⁸ See *Irshād*, VI, 457 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 87 f. For al-Khāqānī, see above, nn. 128 and 129.

¹³⁹ In connection with the composition of *Khafīf*, see below, 112.

¹⁴⁰ See *Irshād*, VI, 457, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 87.

¹⁴¹ See below, 41.

¹⁴² See below, 50.

complexion and large eyes, as well as a long beard—hardly very characteristic features. Equally commonplace was the statement that he was well-spoken and eloquent. It was more noteworthy that his hair and beard stayed quite black until he was in his eighties. He was tall and lean.¹⁴³ His leanness may have contributed to his vigor and good health throughout his long life. As far as our knowledge goes, he was seriously ill only during his last ten years when he suffered from attacks by an illness diagnosed as pleurisy (*dhāt al-janb*).¹⁴⁴ It may have been illness or old age that caused him to stop lecturing some time before his death.¹⁴⁵

His leanness may not exclusively have been an accident of heredity. He was very diet-conscious. The noteworthy feature of the diet favored by him is that it was one that would find qualified approval among today's dietitians.¹⁴⁶ He avoided fat and ate red meat plainly prepared (*al-ṣirf*), cooked with nothing but raisins (raisin juice *zabīb*). He ate only white bread (*samīdh*), because it was baked with refined wheat flour (*ghasl al-qamḥ*).¹⁴⁷ He liked *rāziqī* grapes, *wazīrī* figs,¹⁴⁸ fresh dates (*ruṭab*), and *ḥiṣrim* ("unripe fruit")¹⁴⁹ in season to go with his meals. He counseled

143. See *TB*, II, 166, quoted by *Irshād*, VI, 423, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 40; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 170; Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 282. Ibn ʿAsākir, XCI, considered the little-changed hair color noteworthy.

144. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 94. "Pleurisy" is a conventional translation. It is impossible to guess what illness was really meant according to modern terminology.

145. See below, 83 and 120.

146. All the information on Ṭabarī's diet discussed here appears in *Irshād*, VI, 459 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 90 ff.

147. *Samīdh*, an ancient Semitic word, is connected with Greek *semidalis* and, possibly, also with *semolina*. See Fraenkel, *Fremdwörter*, 32, and, for instance, Brockelmann, *Lex. Syr.*², 479b, and von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch*, (II), 1018a. For the suggested relation of Latin *simila* (from which *semolina* is derived) with the Semitic word, see, for instance, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 1763a.

148. For the *rāziqī* grape, see Lane, 1077a; Heine, *Weinstudien*, 121; and, for instance, Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, III, 987 f.; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *al-Ajwibah al-muskitah*, 166. The *wazīrī* fig remains to be identified. Both the *wazīrī* fig and the *rāziqī* grape are mentioned as noteworthy ʿIrāqī products by Abū Bakr al-Khūwārizmī, *Rasāʾil*, 49. Cf. also Jāhīz, *Ḥayawān*, VIII, 8; al-Huṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 291 (Cairo 1372/1953).

149. *Ḥiṣrim* is mentioned, for instance, by Rāzī, *Hāwī*, XX, 300, XXIII, 1, 44. For a potion (*sharāb*) made from it, see *Hāwī*, XXI, 1, 118; it is possibly identical with the thickened juice (*rubb*) of *ḥiṣrim* mentioned by Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 483. For the dish called *ḥiṣrimīyyah*, see Rosenthal, "Hidden illness," 59, n. 89. The reference to *ḥiṣrim* is continued with the remark that "in the summer, he often did not go without *ḥays* (date meal mixed with butter and curd), basil, and nenuphar."

against the consumption of sesame, honey, and dried dates (*tamr*), to which he ascribed unpleasant side effects, such as overloading (*l-ṭ-kh*, lit. soiling) the stomach, weakening one's eyesight, and ruining the teeth;¹⁵⁰ and in the case of sesame and honey, also causing bad mouth odor. His favorite food was a special milk dish cooked until the milk was condensed, with bread crumbs added, and then eaten cold with milk, seasoned with marjoram/thyme (*ṣ/sa'tar*), *ḥabb al-sawdā'*,¹⁵¹ and olive oil. He also enjoyed *isfidhbāj* and *zīrbāj*, kinds of pies made with meat or chicken and gruel.¹⁵² When he overindulged occasionally, as he had to in order to be good company during a picnic with his neighbors in the countryside, and ate too much of a bean dish,¹⁵³ he later treated himself at home with a variety of medicines including electuaries.¹⁵⁴

His diet was clearly based upon the views and practices of contemporary medicine, in which he considered himself well-versed. It owed little, if anything, to the delight in high cuisine widespread among the upper crust of society and the intellectuals moving among them, or the squeamishness affected by the *zurafā'*, the refined dandies.¹⁵⁵ On the other hand, his insistence on good table manners, while certainly in keeping with prevailing fashions, derived mainly from the religious law which paid much attention to the subject. His appearance projected the cleanliness demanded by religion and society, just as it reflected his inner purity.¹⁵⁶ He

150. See below, n. 237.

151. Unidentified.

152. *Zīrbāj(ah)*, approximately "underlaid gruel," appears, for instance, in Ṭabarī, *Firdaws* 476; *Arabian Nights*, ed. Mahdi, 304; Dozy, I, 618b; Steingass, 633b (*zīrbā*); Rodinson, "Recherches," 134, n. 3, 137, 149 ("poulet en gelée"). *Isfidhbāj* "white gruel" is listed in Dozy, I, 22b; Steingass, 58b; *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 31 f., trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 46. Dishes in Ṭabarī's time commonly had Persian names; Ṭabarī's Persian origin had nothing to do with their use by him.

153. *Qarāh al-bāqillā*, approximately "clear bean broth," may be identical with *mā' al-bāqillā* described in *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 33, trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 47.

154. "Electuaries (*juwārishnāt*)" have a long chapter in Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 474–81. See also Wörterbuch, K, 365b, s. v. *kammūnī*; Steingass, 1100b (*guwārish*, *guwārish* [!]).

155. For the social stratum of *zurafā'*, see, for instance, Washshā', *Muwashshā*, 129 ff.; Ghazi, "Raffinés," 39 ff. In connection with Ṭabarī's leanness mentioned before, see *Muwashshā*, 50, where the Arab ideal of leanness is discussed.

156. See *Irshād*, VI, 456, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 86.

would put his hand into the bowl and take a morsel, then, when coming back for a second time, he would wipe clean the part of the bowl that had become besmeared the first time, so that only one side of the bowl would be soiled.¹⁵⁷ He took a bite of food with his right hand as was proper, but he simultaneously also covered his beard with his left, lest it be soiled by dripping sauce or the like. He daintily used his napkin to wipe his mouth, and he did not spit in public. Such spitting was hardly less of a social sin than was frequently swearing by God. He studiously avoided both.¹⁵⁸

Less commendable, it seems to us, was his attitude toward another guest at a banquet who noticed how longingly a waiter looked at one of the dishes and sneaked him a morsel from it. Ṭabarī shamed the man by asking pointedly who had given him permission to do that.¹⁵⁹ And again, his general fastidiousness provoked him to gossip criticism of a great scholar, Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī. He told others that he had seen Abū Ḥātim applying stibium (*kuhl*) to his eyes so clumsily that some of it ran down on his beard and from there on his clothes in front. In a way, for Ṭabarī, that seemed to disqualify Abū Ḥātim from being considered a respectable scholar.¹⁶⁰

All these small details are no doubt to be taken as factual. It is hard to imagine that anyone would have bothered to invent them. It was more perfunctory to describe Ṭabarī as living the true religious life, as someone who was abstemious and observed the religious law punctiliously. Even if it was perfunctory, it is not difficult to believe that it described him accurately. His daily routine is also described in an interesting manner. As customary, it began with the preceding night. He slept in (a room cooled with dampened?) felt in a short-sleeved shirt perfumed with sandal oil and rose water.¹⁶¹ He rose early for the morning prayer at home, then did research and writing until afternoon. He prayed the afternoon

157. Ibn Kāmil has the following introductory remark: "I have never seen anyone eat in a more refined manner (*azraf aklan*)."

158. See *Irshād*, VI, 459, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 90, from Ibn Kāmil. For the use of the napkin, see the forthcoming article "mandil" in *EF*².

159. See *Irshād*, VI, 458 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 89.

160. See Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 101, from Ibn Kāmil. Zubaydī, 65, seems to quote the year of Ṭabarī's death from al-Farghānī.

161. For the manifold uses of *ṣandal* and *mā' al-ward* in perfumes, see, for instance, Kindī (pseudo-), *Kīmiyā'*, 342, ff., 268 f.

prayer in public, presumably in his mosque in Sūq al-'Aṭash. He recited the Qur'ān and taught Qur'ān reading there until evening. Finally, before returning home, he taught jurisprudence and studied (having students study jurisprudence and other subjects) until the time of the late night prayer.¹⁶² The details here appear a bit schematic and hardly characteristic of Ṭabarī as an individual. But the description of his daily routine makes the obvious point that he led a highly disciplined life.

Urbanity and wit combined in Ṭabarī with a sense of humor. Along with the ability to write occasional verse with reflections on man and society—for Ṭabarī's poetical efforts, see below, 48—all this was very much part of the picture of the good Muslim. Meeting the nine-year-old son of Ibn Kāmil, he would playfully comment on his names and their auspicious omen.¹⁶³ A witty remark might express his strong conviction that religious scholarship deserved precedence over political prominence. A person whose turn had come to read the Qur'ān hesitated when he noticed that the great wazīr al-Faḍl b. Ja'far b. al-Furāt had just entered the room. "Your turn is now," Ṭabarī told him, "so don't be disturbed by either the Tigris or the Euphrates (*Furāt*)!"¹⁶⁴ A conversation with Abū al-Faraj b. al-Thallāḡ¹⁶⁵ was on a less elevated level. It was about cooking and involved the preparation of a dish called *ṭabāhajah*. Abū al-Faraj pronounced it *ṭabāhaqah* and defended his pronunciation with the (quite correct) observation that Persian *g* appeared in Arabic as either *j* or *q*. Ṭabarī rejoined that in this case, his name should be Abū al-Faraq b. al-Thallāq. This was meant as light banter and not in any way as indicative of Ṭabarī as a stickler for philological accuracy.¹⁶⁶ In fact, he was not above making fun, as philologists were wont to do, of the pedantry of many of their colleagues. He complained that a certain Abū Bakr b. al-Jawālīqī overdid things to the point of nausea (*bugḥdah* "ha-

162. See *Irshād*, VI, 460, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 92.

163. See above, 15.

164. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, ll. 13 f. For the Ibn al-Furāt family of officials, see *EP*², III, 767 f., s. v.

165. See below, n. 195.

166. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 93. For *ṭabāhajah*, see *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 16 f., trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 37. Ṭabarī cannot have been ignorant of the equivalence of *j* and *q* in Arabicized Persian words. The well-known sweet dish *fālūdḥaj* was no doubt known to him in this form, but he writes *fālūdhaq* in *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, I, 105.

tred"). The unfortunate fellow became known as *Baghiḍ al-Ṭabarī*, approximately "Ṭabarī's pet hatred."¹⁶⁷ Yet, Ṭabarī's friendly joking in company was never permitted by him to degenerate into conflicting with the seriousness required of scholars.¹⁶⁸

Ṭabarī's life as a human being is presented as that of an individual living up to the best ideals of his society. Major flaws, if there were any,¹⁶⁹ are not indicated in our biographical sources. The picture before our eyes may indeed have been composed of real, historically true fragments from the life of an exceptional man.

The scholar

Even as a child, Ṭabarī used to say in later life, he had wanted to write a Qur'ān commentary along the lines of his great *Tafsīr*.¹⁷⁰ His scholarly productivity, indeed, constituted an uninterrupted continuum from his early youth to his death. Publication of his principal legal works came first and never stopped, followed by that of his Qur'ān Commentary and, finally, the *History*. His primary focus was jurisprudence. Like other scholars of the time,¹⁷¹ he specialized in three fields, which had to be mastered by every legal scholar to some degree: legal theory as such and as it applied to legal practice, Qur'ānic science, and history in the restricted sense of a few dates of the lives of individuals. An understanding of the science of *ḥadīth* was basic to all three subjects. Ṭabarī's contribution to all of them was gigantic. It was his particular merit that he eventually went beyond the religious and legal interest of his colleagues in biographical data and expanded it into a historical work that dealt with the entire sweep of history known to him.¹⁷²

167. See *Irshād*, VI, 461, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 93 f. The source (Ibn Kāmil ?) continues with an anecdote about the foolishness of the man.

168. See *Irshād*, VI, 456 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 86.

169. On questionable character traits, see below, 58 f. They are rare and doubtful.

170. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 11 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 62.

171. The works of Ibn Ḥanbal, who was averse to publishing, included a *Tafsīr* and a *Ta'rikh* (at least according to his biographer Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib*, 248 f.) Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 229, makes no mention of a *Ta'rikh*.

172. Earlier or contemporary histories that were written by jurists are apparently not preserved.

The central position of the law in Muslim society required its theoreticians and practitioners to possess a certain familiarity with most aspects of Muslim civilization. As a genius whose accomplishments allowed viewing him as the perfect scholar, Ṭabarī was credited with exceptional learning in a variety of disciplines. It could easily be deduced from his *Tafsīr* that he was well-versed in grammar and lexicography.¹⁷³ Excellence was claimed for him also in other fields of philology classified among the Arab linguistic sciences. His personal contacts with philologists of all descriptions were quite numerous, if much less so than his contacts with traditionists and legal scholars. For instance, he visited the philologist Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, possibly in those early years when he studied in al-Baṣrah. He appears to have been repelled by his disregard for cleanliness,¹⁷⁴ and, in addition to a few *ḥadīths*, he did not learn much more from him than a far-fetched etymology for his native Ṭabaristān as derived from "land of the axe (Persian *tabar=ṭabar*)" so named because the early Muslim settlers there were forced to clear the woods with axes.¹⁷⁵

His interest in foreign languages deserves notice, in particular, because it is connected with his attitude toward the intensely debated question of the occurrence of non-Arabic words in the Qur'ān. He naturally knew Persian, even if sporadic quotation of Persian verses does not mean very much in this respect.¹⁷⁶ In *Tafsīr*, he discussed the relationship of Persian and Arabic (I, 7) and the Ethiopic loan words (I, 6–8). From al-Farrā', he learned that *fātiḥ* or *fattāḥ* apparently meant "judge" in the language of 'Umān (IX, 3, l. 12, *ad* Qur. 8:89), clearly a South Arabian (South Semitic) term. *Mūsā* could be derived from Coptic "water" and "tree" (*moou* and *sei* [?])^{176a} (I, 222, l. 2, *ad* Qur. 2:51).

173. See *Irshād*, VI, 437, l. 14, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 60. *Tahdhīb* is mentioned there as providing additional evidence, as, in fact, it does by its regular sections on strange words in the traditions under discussion.

174. See above, n. 160.

175. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 5–11, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 48. The etymology is repeated with some modifications by Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 39, and Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, III, 503.

176. See *History*, text below, II, 193, 1494, 1602, f., and von Grünebaum, "Bemerkung," 224; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 135, n. 1.

176a. Bentley Layton calls my attention to *ṣēn* as the common Coptic word for "tree," and to *še/ē/i*, meaning "wood." The word meant here may, in fact, be *ṣēn*. It would render the second part of the name of Moses according to its Hebrew/Aramaic form and point to a Jewish or, more likely, Christian origin of the

He was aware of the fanciful suggestion that *ṭāhā* is "O man" in Nabataean/Syriac (XVI, 102 f., *ad* Qur. 20:2), but he apparently rejected the (Byzantine) Greek derivation of *firdaws* (XVI, 29, l. 22, *ad* Qur. 18:107). All this is traditional material long at home in Qur'ān commentaries,¹⁷⁷ yet, it underlines Ṭabarī's concern with language.

He is said to have studied poetry with the great philologist Tha'lab (200–91/815[6]–904) and to have been one of his early students. Tha'lab had a reputation for severity in his judgment of other scholars and was considered to be a difficult person to deal with, but he called Ṭabarī one of the most sagacious Kūfan (grammarians). He lived to see him achieve great fame with his *Tafsīr*.¹⁷⁸ Ṭabarī was also acquainted with Tha'lab's disciple, Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid, known as Ghulām Tha'lab (261–345/874[5]–957), who praised the *Tafsīr*'s accuracy in grammar and language.¹⁷⁹ While still in his youth, Ṭabarī acquired an expert knowledge of Arabic poetry. It stood him in good stead in Egypt when Ibn Sirāj asked him about the seventh-century poet al-Ṭirimmāh, whose poetry was no longer known in Egypt. Ṭabarī knew al-Ṭirimmāh's poems by heart and was able to recite and explain them in public.¹⁸⁰

Another anecdote, however, tries to belittle Ṭabarī's knowledge of poetry and related subjects. The Ḥanafite judge and litterateur Aḥmad b. Ishāq b. al-Buhlūl (231–317 or 318/845–929 or 930) entered into an animated conversation on many subjects with a person he did not recognize who was sitting next to him at a funeral. Ibn al-Buhlūl's son, Abū Ṭālib Muḥammad (d. 348/959), told him that his conversation partner was the famous Ṭabarī. Then, on an-

etymology taken over by the Qur'ān commentators. The neglect of the final *n* of *ṣēn* may have been triggered originally by thinking of the accusative ending of the name in Greek. See Crum, 317a (*sei*), 568b (*ṣēn*), and 546a (*ṣe/ē/i*).

177. As are phonetic observations such as the exchangeability of *th* and *f* (*Tafsīr*, I, 247, l. 9, *ad* Qur. 2:61 XXX, 47, l. 7, *ad* Qur. 81:11), *s* and *z* (VIII, 157, ll. 8 f., *ad* Qur. 7:71), and *k* and *q* (XXX, 47, l. 5, *ad* Qur. 81:11).

178. See *Irshād*, VI, 438, ll. 1–6, 439, l. 6, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 60, 62, l. 4. For Tha'lab, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 140–2. Since Tha'lab had finished his studies already in 225/240 and was by then a popular teacher (see *TB*, V, 205, l. 6, 209, l. 21), it seems rather implausible that Ṭabarī studied with him before he had many students.

179. See *Irshād*, VI, 439, ll. 12–15, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 62. For Ghulām Tha'lab, see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 147 f.

180. See *Irshād*, VI, 432, ll. 14–16, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 53. *Tahdhīb* repeatedly quotes his poetry.

other similar occasion, he engaged Ṭabarī in reciting poetry and biographical data (*siyar*, connected with poetry). Ṭabarī frequently faltered, but Ibn al-Buhlūl was able to recite all the verses without a hitch and give all the answers.^{180a}

The theory of versification as embodied in the science of prosody (*ʿarūd*) was known to Ṭabarī. How solid his knowledge was, is another question. He was asked about prosody in Egypt and supposedly learned all there was to know about it overnight from a borrowed copy of al-Khalīl's fundamental work on the subject.¹⁸¹ Someone of his intellectual caliber could probably become proficient in any subject by just reading one book about it.

Ṭabarī seems to have enjoyed discussing evidential verses in *Tafsīr* and, especially, in *Tahdhīb* for the explanation of rare words in traditions. He inserted poetical quotations in *History* when they served to enliven the narrative or to support the historical argument, whether he chose the verses himself or, which is much more likely in most cases, quoted them from the sources used by him. He was fond of reciting verses and composing some of his own, and he engaged in occasional poetic exchanges with friends and acquaintances; this, of course, was the custom of all educated persons in medieval Islam.¹⁸²

He often recited verses that al-Awzāʿī had earlier been fond of; they dealt with the advisability of decent persons remaining aloof and keeping concealed what they knew and could do, when conditions in the world were topsy-turvy and stupidity and meanness prevailed.¹⁸³ He is credited with verses extolling *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth* scholars. For him, they represented all that is of true value for Muslims; he incidentally used the opportunity to excoriate any interest in "innovations" (*bidaʿ*).¹⁸⁴

The verses most generally ascribed to him speak of his con-

180a. See *TB*, IV, 32 f.; ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Qurashī, I, 58 f.

181. See *Irshād*, VI, 434 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 56. Another reference to Ṭabarī's competence in prosody is found in *Irshād*, VI, 427, l. 6, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 45, l. 9, in a quotation from *al-Iqnāʾ fī ihdāʾ ash-rata qirāʾah* by al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ahwāzī [362-446/972|3]-1054; see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 720).

182. See above, 43.

183. See Muʾāfā, *ḥalīs*, I, 168 f.

184. See Ibn ʿAsākīr, LXXXVI f. Although the verses are introduced as "by" Ṭabarī, he may have merely quoted them. This is even more likely with four verses addressed to Mayyās, which are a satire on an irrelevant {person?}; see Ibn ʿAsākīr, LXXXVIII. On Ṭabarī's attitude toward "innovations," see below, 61.

tempt for worldly riches and the negative qualities commonly associated with wealth and poverty:

When I am in financial difficulties, my companion won't know it.
When I am wealthy, my friend will be wealthy.

My sense of shame preserves me my decency
as well as my gentility (*rifqī*) in making demands on my
companion (*rafīqī*).

Were I willing to squander my decency,
it would be easy for me to become rich.

Perhaps they also reflect the middle-class circumstances in which he grew up and spent his entire life:

I do not like two character qualities and what they represent:
the arrogance of wealth and the humility of poverty.

When you get wealthy, don't get arrogant,
and when you get poor, show your disrespect for fate!¹⁸⁵

To a high ranking 'Alid who had written him complaining about the difficulty of finding reliable friends and distinguishing between good and bad ones, Ṭabarī—apparently assuming that the writer could possibly have meant him by "someone," although he eagerly desired to be esteemed by him—replied:

My amīr has a bad opinion of someone seriously concerned.
Would there were a way to obtain his good opinion!

(Re)consider, my amīr, what you have thought and said,
for a good opinion from you is something beautiful.¹⁸⁶

185. These verses are found in all major biographical notices, all of which depend on *TB*, II, 165, so that the occasional variant readings they contain are of no significance. The exception is Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, who does not mention the verses. In this context, it may be meaningful that the Prophetic tradition quoted by Ṭabarī to the author of *Aghānī* (see above, n. 75) condemns the arrogant treatment of others as inferiors by expecting them to rise (for the *ḥadīth*, see Ibn Hanbal, IV, 91, 95).

186. See *TB*, II, 166, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII, *Irshād*, VI, 426, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 43. The circumstances of the poetical exchange were apparently unknown to the author of *TB*. The writer, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā al-'Alawī, remains unidentified. Others named Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā, such as the one who died in 323/935 (*TB*, IV, 280 f.)

All these verses are pleasant enough, but they are nothing out of the ordinary. Al-Qiftī exaggerated more than a little when he described Ṭabarī's poetry as "above the poetry of scholars,"¹⁸⁷ even if scholarly poetry, it must be said, never enjoyed any critical acclaim to begin with. The last word on Ṭabarī as a poet or critic of poetry belonged to the prominent litterateur al-Ṣūlī. He moved in court circles and may well have caught at least occasional glimpses of Ṭabarī in his old age. Confronted with a variant reading in a verse as quoted in *History* (text below, I, 759), he ruled out the possibility that Ṭabarī's text might be correct. He remarked tartly that Ṭabarī was not as great an authority on rare words in poetry as he was on other subjects.¹⁸⁸

Ṭabarī's acquaintance with the exact sciences such as arithmetic and algebra was hardly intimate. He can be assumed to have had some knowledge, such as was needed by jurists.¹⁸⁹ A mastery of logic, dialectics, and, indeed, *falsafah* ("Greek philosophy")¹⁹⁰ was attributed to him. Contemporary speculative theology was saturated with philosophical thought, and Ṭabarī had to know and make use of the various techniques of philosophy as tools for the refutation of sectarian (Mu'tazilah) views and the defense of his beliefs.

Medicine was one of his great interests. As many other learned men were accustomed to do, he sometimes dabbled in the practice of it. A fellow Ṭabarī, 'Alī b. Rabban, was the author of an important medical encyclopaedia entitled *Firdaws al-ḥikmah*. This work became Ṭabarī's medical bible. Ibn Rabban, we hear, considered the study of medicine (as well as some knowledge of moral philosophy) indispensable for a maturing boy of fourteen.¹⁹¹ Little is known about his biography, except that he was a government

or the one mentioned below, n. 352, are no doubt not the same person. The place where he wrote to Ṭabarī may be identical with al-Balad near Mosul.

187. See Qiftī, *Muḥammadūn*, 264.

188. See Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Rādī wa-al-Muttaqī*, 39, trans. Canard, I, 84; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 53.

189. See *Irshād*, VI, 438 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 61.

190. For logic and dialectics, see *Irshād*, loc. cit. (n. 189), and, for dialectics, *Irshād*, VI, 437, ll. 15 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 60. According to Ibn 'Asākir, XC, Ṭabarī studied "the theories of the philosophers and physicists."

191. See Ṭabarī, *Firdaws*, 99. It may be noted that Ṭabarī was well aware of al-Shāfiʿī's position with regard to (Greek) books on medicine taken as booty, see *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Schacht, 179; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 75, n. 5.

official in his native country in earlier years and that he remained a Christian for much of his life before he converted to Islam during the reign of al-Mutawakkil.¹⁹² Ṭabarī may in fact have known him personally, possibly during his early years in Baghdad, not long before Ibn Rabban's death. The *Firdaws* had been completed a few years before. There is a report, which cannot be verified, that Ṭabarī studied with him the entire work and wrote it down. According to Ibn Kāmil, he had a copy of it in six parts in his possession. He even kept it under his prayer carpet.¹⁹³

Ṭabarī occasionally gave medical advice to his friends and students when one of their children became sick. When Abū al-Faraj b. al-Thallāj, who later was a jurist of Ṭabarī's legal school, fell ill, Ṭabarī suggested a cure to his father Abū al-'Abbās. The worried father was only too willing to give it a try, for he reasoned that coming from a man like Ṭabarī, it no doubt enjoyed divine blessing. Ṭabarī described his suggested remedy and the way it was to be applied in these words: "Shave his head and prepare very greasy cakes smothered in (chicken) fat."¹⁹⁴ Let him eat them until he is full, then take the rest and put it on his pate and let him sleep in this condition. If God wills, he will be all right."¹⁹⁵ The remedy proved effective—and certainly could not have done any harm—and Abū al-Faraj recovered, but Ṭabarī outlived him, and Abū al-Faraj died a short while before him. Ṭabarī also treated himself when he was ill. He described to a Christian physician sent to him by the wazīr 'Alī b. Īsā what he had done to cure himself. The physician had to admit that he himself could not have done better. With rather heavy flattery, he added that if Ṭabarī were a Christian, his coreligionists would consider him one of the apostles.¹⁹⁶

192. See Ullmann, *Medizin*, 119–22; Sezgin, *GAS*, III, 236–40.

193. See *Irshād*, VI, 429, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 48.

194. For *jūdhābah* (Persian *gūdhāb*), see, for instance, *Ṭabikh*, ed. al-Bārūdī, 71 f. (ch. 8), trans. Arberry, "A Baghdad cookery book," 208 f. and 28 f. where Arberry translates a couple of poems on *jūdhābah*. See also Rodinson, "Recherches," 103, 133.

195. See *Irshād*, VI, 460, f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 93. On Ibn al-Thallāj, see above, n. 165.

196. See *Irshād*, VI, 461 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 94. On Ṭabarī's illness, see above, n. 144. The story is remarkable for showing Ṭabarī in direct contact with a non-Muslim. It is hard to say how much other contact with Christians and, perhaps, Jews he might have had. His familiarity with Jewish and Christian historical/religious material does not imply any sort of personal acquaintance. For this

There was a religious side to Ṭabarī's concern with medicine. A quotation from *al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah* (see *Ādāb al-nufūs*, below, 82) recommends the effectiveness of a procedure for relief in unpleasant situations. It had been suggested by an early Muslim and consisted of reciting sūrahs 91 and 92, each seven times, and asking God for help. Relief would come in the first, third, fifth, or, maybe, seventh night. The recipe was tried by someone who felt great pain and did not know what to do about it. He said the prescribed prayer before going to bed. Falling asleep, he immediately dreamed that two men came and sat down, one at his head and the other at his feet. The one told the other to feel his body. When he came to a certain place of his head, he ordered him not to shave the spot but wash it with *khaṭmiyyah* and then draw blood there by means of cupping, with the added suggestion that he ought also to recite sūrah 95. In the morning, he tried to find out why he was told to use *khaṭmiyya*, and he was told that it was for stopping the flow of blood from the wound caused by the bloodletting.¹⁹⁷

As a man of general education, Ṭabarī was thus interested in numerous aspects of contemporary intellectual life. Even those aspects which were viewed with growing suspicion by the legal and religious scholarship, of which Ṭabarī was a foremost representative, were not excluded. He did not contribute actively to them but restricted his serious scholarly efforts to his prime concerns, law and *ḥadīth*, Qur'ānic science, and history. He was conscious of the fact that each of these large fields had its own vocabulary and technique of exposition, but it can be observed that his treatment of them always shows the same general traits characteristic of his approach to scholarship.

His large literary output required considerable discipline in his daily routine and scholarly habits.¹⁹⁸ He paid attention to such comparatively minor details as the best way of reading books in connection with his research. As reported by one of his students,

material, see *History*, translation, Vols. I and II, and Abdalmajid Charfi, "Christianisme."

197. See Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, I, 19, f. For *khaṭmī* (*khiṭmī*) "marshmallow," see, for instance, Lane, 768a; Rosenthal, "Hippocratic Oath," 68 ff.; and, in particular, Rāzī, *Hāwī*, XX, 398–401. *Khaṭmiyyah* is presumably the salve for wounds made from it alone or a concoction with honey water (*melikraton*) mentioned by al-Rāzī in the first place, quoting Dioscurides, III, 146, 1, ed. Wellmann, II, 155, ll. 4 f.

198. See above, 39 and 42 f.

Ibn al-Mughallis, he would systematically go twice through the works he wished to consult, carrying them from one corner of his house to another and then, when he had finished with them, returning them to their original place.¹⁹⁹ He appears to have done all his research by himself without assistants. Only once do we hear that he asked for help in his research. It was near the end of his life that he requested from a bookseller named Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusayn b. Ḥubaysh that he assemble for him the available titles on *qiyās*. They were more than thirty books. When he returned them to the bookseller, it was discovered that he had marked them with red ink,²⁰⁰ apparently his way of locating suitable references to be used by him at some later date.²⁰¹ His lecturing, when a large audience was present, required the customary use of repetitors (*mustamlī*), but the name of only one of them is preserved, Abū Saʿīd ʿAmr b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Dīnawarī.²⁰²

Like other students and scholars, Ṭabarī kept his notebooks and occasionally made reference to them. Quoting an interpretation of Qur. 79:3 by Mujāhid, he indicates that he found it "in my book," presumably a notebook dating back to the time when he studied with Abū Kurayb.²⁰³ A reference to his notebooks is also found in connection with information derived from al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ.²⁰⁴ When there was a question whether ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUmar or ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAmr (b. al-ʿĀṣ) was meant, he called attention to

199. See *Irshād*, VI, 444, ll. 1–6, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 68 f. For a translation of the passage in context, see below, 110. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mughallis died in 324/936. He was a follower of the school of the Zāhirite Dāwūd b. ʿAlī, for whose relations with Ṭabarī see below, 132. For Ibn al-Mughallis, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 218, ll. 4–9; Dhahabī, *Ibar*, II, 201. He provided Ibn Kāmil with much information.

200. See *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 5–8, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 81, and the translation of the passage below, 120. Booksellers customarily served as lending libraries.

201. Possibly, the statement might refer to annotations made by Ṭabarī.

202. He was the transmitter of *Ṣariḥ*, see text, 193, trans., 186. He is the Abū Saʿīd al-Dīnawarī who is said to be Ṭabarī's *mustamlī* in Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 280, and *ʿUluww*, 150. It does not seem impossible that he is identical with Abū Saʿīd ʿUmar b. Aḥmad al-Dīnawarī who played an unhappy role in connection with *Ādāb al-nufūs*; see below, n. 308. Another Dīnawarī, Abū Saʿīd ʿUthmān b. Aḥmad, who reported the anecdote involving Ibn al-Furāt (above, n. 164), is certainly a different person.

203. See *Tafsīr*, XXX, 20, ll. 6 f. The published recension of Mujāhid's commentary does not mention the quotation.

204. See *Tafsīr*, XV, 166, ll. 31 f. (*ad* Qur. 18:46). Al-Ḥasan b. al-Ṣabbāḥ died in 249/863; see *TB*, VII, 330–2; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, II, 289 f.

the fact that it was Ibn 'Umar that was found "in my book."²⁰⁵

Ṭabarī derived the materials for his major publications almost exclusively from written works, despite the pretense of oral transmission which obscures the picture to some degree by preventing more specific reference. In *History*, the written sources used by him are usually transparent, even though they are not preserved,²⁰⁶ but it is very rare indeed that title and author are expressly mentioned, as in the case of the *History of the Baṣrans* (*Kitāb Akhbār ahl al-Baṣrah*) by 'Umar b. Shabbah.²⁰⁷ It was also unusual for him to quote his prime source, in this case, Sayf b. 'Umar, with express reference to "his book."²⁰⁸ He was, of course, aware of the intermediate written stages through which his material reached him, but he only exceptionally mentioned them in the way he did with a book of Abū Qilābah which Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī said he had read.²⁰⁹ The "books" of contemporaries he made use of naturally remained mostly unmentioned, but he tells us how he received information from Ziyād b. Ayyūb. Dallawayh, as Ziyād was called, was a very old man when Ṭabarī met him in Baghdad. He produced for him (*akhraja ilayya*) "a book containing traditions on the authority of several shaykhs who, he said, had been his direct authorities. Some of it he taught me *viva voce*, some he did not. The latter (material) I copied from it (or him, *katabtuhū minhu*)."²¹⁰ A prophetic *ḥadīth* transmitted through Sufyān al-Thawrī described the coming of the Sufyānī at the end of time. It had found much attention in Syria, and Ṭabarī, who obviously did not like it, discussed it there with Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-'Asqalānī. In this connection, Ṭabarī mentions that he also saw

205. See *Dhayl*, III, 2490, ed. Cairo, XI, 638.

206. Ṭabarī's use of them helps to reconstruct them. For recent works on the Ṭabarī sources Abū Mikhnaf and al-Madā'inī, with a thorough discussion of the problems involved, see U. Sezgin, *Abū Mikhnaf*, and Rotter, "Überlieferung." Noth, "Charakter," takes issue (principally on Sayf b. 'Umar) with J. Wellhausen who is reputed to have been among the first to deal with Ṭabarī's sources.

207. See *History*, text below, II, 168.

208. See *History*, text below, I, 2391.

209. See *Tafsīr*, XXX, 174, l. 2 (*ad* Qur. 99:7); Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 68. See also U. Sezgin, *Abū Mikhnaf*, 83, in connection with *History*, II, 881 f.

210. See *History*, text below, I, 3159. Ziyād b. Ayyūb, who was born in 166/782[3], had begun already his serious study of *ḥadīth* at the age of fifteen. He died in 252/866. See Bukhārī, *Ta'rikh*, II, 1, 315; *TB*, VIII, 479-81; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, III, 355.

it in "the book of al-Šudā'ī."²¹¹ As in the case of Ziyād b. Ayyūb, al-Šudā'ī's book appears to have been an unpublished notebook.

Since quotations make up the bulk of the contents of Ṭabarī's major works, the question of his accuracy in quoting arises constantly. It cannot be satisfactorily answered in a general way, since most of his sources are not preserved. Even where they are, it is always possible that Ṭabarī used another text or recension than the one preserved. Small changes in the wording or carefully chosen omissions or the deliberate failure to take account of all available sources can make a big difference and even alter the entire picture, particularly in the interpretation of historical data. It is a safe assumption that Ṭabarī used such procedures on occasion intentionally (and, presumably, most frequently when contemporary 'Abbāsīd interests were involved), or it just happened to him without his being fully aware of the consequences. Modern historians, for whom this is a crucial question, have mostly restricted themselves to raising it in connection with certain points of historical information. This is probably the most that can be done at present.²¹² The assumption that Ṭabarī's quotations can in general be relied upon as being accurate has not been disproved and, as matters stand, remains valid.

At the core, his honest and solid attitude toward scholarship is indisputable. His reverence for scholarship, often stressed by his biographers, is obvious, and so is his desire to present what he considered factual information, hard facts, to his students and to contemporary and future readers. He wished to be concise and to disregard irrelevant data. A cherished anecdote tells of his initial concept of the size of *History* and *Tafsīr*. It was to produce much larger works than he finally did. But when he asked his students whether they possessed the energy to study such enormous works, he found to his dismay that they thought they would not be able to read them in a lifetime. He concluded that their attitude showed a general lack of noble ambition. So he cut the size of the works

211. See *Tafsīr*, XXII, 72 f. (*ad* Qur. 34:51). On al-'Asqalānī, see above, n. 92, and on al-Šudā'ī, see below, translation, n. 168. Ṭabarī's attitude toward the belief in the expected Sufyānī is attested, for instance, below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 181. On notebooks, see also above, 17 and 21.

212. For individual studies, see above, n. 206, and, for a general judgment, see Cahen, "L'historiographie arabe," 149 and 160.

down to what it eventually became.²¹³ The anecdote is almost certain to be an invention without any basis in fact, but it shows a true understanding not only of Ṭabarī's tremendous capacity but also of his concern with the essentials in all his publications. He continually stressed that he wanted to be brief or that he did not want to repeat himself.²¹⁴ Statements of this sort take the place of accurate cross-referencing, for which there existed no practical methods in the manuscript age.²¹⁵ Their frequency also reveals his realization of the need for economy in dealing effectively with a body of knowledge which already in his time had grown to almost unmanageable proportions.

The most remarkable aspect of Ṭabarī's approach is his constant and courageous expression of "independent judgment (*ijtihād*).\" After having quoted his sources and the views represented by them, he states what he considered the most acceptable view. With respect to legal and dogmatic differences, Ṭabarī is not reluctant to make his preference known, as is clear from *Ṭabṣīr* and the preserved parts of *Ikhtilāf* and *Tahdhīb*. Expectedly, this feature is much more prominent in *Tafsīr* than it is in *History*. His own views are consistently introduced by "Abū Ja'far says". He carefully argues and documents what he believes to be the "most likely" report or opinion.²¹⁶ His conclusions, it may be added, usu-

213. See *TB*, II, 163, quoted by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII, Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 42, *Irshād*, VI, 424 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 42; Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274 f.; and *Tadhkirat al-ḥuffāz*, II, 252.

214. All of Ṭabarī's major works, but particularly *Tafsīr*, state more frequently that there is no need for repetition (*i'ādah*) than that making the work unnecessarily long is to be avoided (*iṭlāh*). For *History*, see text below, I, 251, (translation, Vol. II, 46), and I, 671.

215. Such cross-referencing as there is was not very convenient even for learned Qur'ān scholars. See *Tafsīr*, VI, 29, l. 21 (*ad Qur.* 4:175), referring back to the verse on inheritance (Qur. 4:12) earlier in sūrah 4, or *Tafsīr*, XIII, 155, l. 1 (*ad Qur.* 14:37), referring back to sūrah 2 (verses 125 ff.).

216. In *Tafsīr*, the most commonly used term is "the correct view (*al-ṣawāb*) in my/our opinion." Elsewhere, the expression "the truth in my opinion (*al-ḥaqq 'indi*)" is also found. *Ṭabṣīr* uses both indiscriminately. The situation in *Ikhtilāf* is slightly puzzling. In Schacht's text, Ṭabarī does not explicitly indicate his preferences. Kern's text, on the other hand, has at first a number of instances of *al-ḥaqq 'indi* (I, 13, 19, 22, 24, 29); later, it is quite regularly *al-ṣawāb 'indi* (over twenty-five occurrences) or simply "our opinion." There are two possible explanations: The books of *Ikhtilāf* were written at different times or what is preserved represents different (perhaps also abridged) recensions. Either explanation is applicable, it would seem, according to the various parts of the preserved text.

ally deserve respect to this day. It is, of course, clear that he was a "compiler," in the sense that he reported the evidence derived from his sources without immediate comment or basic distortion. Most scholarly works in Muslim civilization followed this highly recommendable method. It was, however, an unfortunate misjudgment on the part of Brockelmann (*GAL*, I, 142, *GAL*,² I, 148) to speak of him as unoriginal ("kein selbständiger Kopf"), when he was undeniably concerned above all with seeing things his way, that is, being original and independent in his approach.

His own views often leaned toward moderation and compromise. He stated innumerable times that two of the suggested readings of a Qur'ānic passage were both possible and can be accepted and used as correct.²¹⁷ It was not only readings but also interpretations that challenged his tendency toward compromise. Two examples may be mentioned.

A particularly knotty problem presented itself in Qur. 5:6, the verse which somehow gave rise to one of the famous distinctions between Shī'ites and Sunnīs—the Shī'ah practice of "wiping" (the boots, although neither *khuffayn* nor any other footgear is mentioned in the Qur'ān) as against the sunnī practice of "washing" the feet in the ritual ablution before prayer.²¹⁸ It hinges on whether one reads the word "feet" as either a genitive or an accusative. Both readings, Ṭabarī argues, yield the same meaning as far as the legal requirement is concerned. However, he gives preference to the genitive on the basis of his interpretation of the meaning of "wiping" in the verse and for syntactic reasons. The philological

While the occurrences in *Tafsīr* are legion, there are fewer occasions for them in *History*, but they are not entirely absent, if in rather different forms. Thus *History*, text below, I, 416, speaks of one statement as more likely true (*ashbah bi-al-ḥaqq*) than another. Or Ṭabarī's opinion is given conditionally: "If this version is correct, then the first statement is wrong" (*History*, text below, I, 1367). *Wa-al-ṣawāb 'indi* appears in *History*, III, 1436.

217. On the expression of preference with respect to Qur'ān readings (*ikhtiyār*), see Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 132 ff. There may be more than two readings involved, as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, XXVII, 16, ll. 27 f. (*ad Qur.* 52:21). Occasionally, Ṭabarī expressly states his own preference for one reading as the only one that is acceptable to him as correct, as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, V, 209, ll. 13 f. (*ad Qur.* 4:135 end).

218. See *Tafsīr*, VI, 81, l. 3–87, l. 22. Ṭabarī's conclusion appears on pp. 83, l. 19–84, l. 13. For a concise exposition of the problem in relation to Qur'ānic data, see Paret, *Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz*, 115 f. See also Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 141.

point he makes in favor of the genitive is absolutely correct. Yet, the accusative became the Kūfī reading adopted in the canonic text, so as to leave no doubt about the "washing" of the feet. Ṭabarī's interpretation of "wiping" amounts to wiping the feet in their entirety *with water* (not mentioned in the Qur'ānic verse but somehow deducible from the sand ablution [*tayammum*] in Qur. 4:43) by using one's hand or its equivalent; thus wiping *and* washing are one process (which makes for more problems, such as whether washing without wiping is in compliance with the law). The discussion of this legal point of ritual is extraordinarily long, given Ṭabarī's concept of what his Qur'ān commentary should legitimately deal with.²¹⁹ He takes great pains to weaken or reinterpret traditions that would favor the Shī'ah practice, and pleads for the correctness of the sunnī view. His plea fell on deaf ears in certain circles prejudiced against him. He was accused of sympathy with the Shī'ah on this point. His expressed preference for the genitive reading could easily be seen as tilting toward the Shī'ah, no matter how consistently he argued for the sunnī practice, which he clearly accepted as the proper one.²²⁰ The balancing feat he performs gives the impression of being a compromise between his scholarly instincts and the religious practices which he felt it necessary to uphold at all costs.

Another similar example is the way in which he argues both sides of a sensitive issue of a dogmatic nature that had arisen in

219. The subject of *aḥkām*, the legal data furnished by the Qur'ān, was a well-established subdiscipline of Qur'ānic science by the time of Ṭabarī. It was treated apart from general commentaries. Ṭabarī considered legal excursions not appropriate in *Tafsīr*. Thus, he declared a detailed discussion of unintentional (*khaṭa'*) killing to be out of place, since "our intention in this work (*Tafsīr*) is the explanation of the Revelation, and *khaṭa'* is not mentioned in it." He referred the reader to *Latīf* instead. See *Tafsīr*, VII, 28, ll. 30 ff. (*ad* Qur. 5:95); similarly, VII, 203, ll. 9 ff. (*ad* Qur. 6:103). Nevertheless, Ṭabarī was inevitably drawn into legal discussions on subjects such as retaliation (*qisās*) (II, 60, *ad* Qur. 2:178), inheritance law (II, 74, *ad* Qur. 2:182), fasting (II, 103, *ad* Qur. 2:187), pilgrimage (II, 153, *ad* Qur. 2:193), divorce (II, 270 ff., *ad* Qur. 2:228 f.), prayer (II, 352, *ad* Qur. 2:238), abrogation (III, 12, *ad* Qur. 2:256, and elsewhere), entering the shops of merchants (XVIII, 90 f., *ad* Qur. 24:29). See also the preceding note and the discussion of *Latīf*, below, 113 ff.

220. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 172. Ibn al-Jawzī seems to express here his own view (see also below, n. 233). Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān*, V, 103, makes the hardly plausible suggestion that the statement that Ṭabarī was satisfied with wiping the feet in the ritual ablution might refer to the Shī'ite Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (see below, 118 f.).

connection with *maqāman maḥmūdan* in Qur. 17:79.²²¹ While the ablution problem concerned the entire Muslim community, his compromise in the case of *maqāman maḥmūdan* was dictated by the need to defend himself against personal attacks. Compromise by Ṭabarī, however, must never be confused with an absence of firm conviction.

The preoccupation with legal issues and the religious problems inextricably connected with them dominated the course of his life as a scholar. His stance was moderate to some degree, at least in minor matters. He might use the harsh word "obtuse" for someone who, he thought, did not understand him correctly;²²² but he also expressed himself in speaking about other scholars with a certain politeness ("I fear that shaykh erred").²²³ On occasion, he was ready with sharp remarks, such as the observation that he had seen al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad al-Dūrī so intoxicated that "the walls were hitting him".²²⁴ On his part, his reputation protected him from criticism in later centuries, but not entirely. His alleged attacks on Ibn 'Amīr, one of the seven early Qur'ān readers, were criticized.²²⁵ The historian Ibn al-Athīr would frankly object to some aspect of Ṭabarī's approach to history,²²⁶ and there is an intriguing statement that "various criticisms were made of him (*takallamū fih bi-anwā'*)," which originated in circles with strong ties to Šūfism.²²⁷ These criticisms may very well have been of an

221. See below, 71 ff. and Appendix B.

222. See *Tafsīr*, II, 269, l. 5 (*ad Qur. 2:227*).

223. See *Tafsīr*, II, 91, l. 5 (*ad Qur. 2:185*).

224. See *TB*, XII, 145, ll. 12–14, from Ibn Kāmil. Al-Dūrī (185–271/801–84) is mentioned quite frequently as an authority of Ṭabarī. It may be noted that he was an authority of Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Zāhiri (see *TB*, V, 256, l. 2). He was also one of those who supported the authenticity of the attribution to Mujāhid of the disputed interpretation of *maqāman maḥmūdan*, and was repeatedly cited in this connection by Khallāl, *Musnad*; see also Dhahabī, *Uluww*, 143. For Ṭabarī on Abū Ḥatim al-Sijistānī, see above, n. 160, and on Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, below, n. 229.

225. See Ibn al-Jazari, *Ghāyah*, I, 424, ll. 19 f.

226. See below, translation, introduction, n. 3.

227. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVIII f. Ibn 'Asākir had the remark from Abū al-Muzaffar 'Abd al-Mun'im b. 'Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī (445–532/1053–1137[8]), a son of the author of the *Risālah*, the famous handbook on Šūfism. It went back to al-Sulamī (d. 412/1021) who collected Šūfī biographies in his *Ṭabaqāt al-Šūfiyya*. Not much is known so far about Ṭabarī's attitude toward Šūfism. He used Šūfī material in *Ādāb al-nufūs*; see below, 82. He certainly was opposed to the ecstatic mysticism which spread rapidly during his lifetime; see *History*, text below, III,

objective nature, but already his contemporaries felt that he was the innocent target of harmful and malicious slander "by enviers, ignoramuses, and heretics."²²⁸

Some fragments of a bitter controversy tell us of an occasion where Ṭabarī had to defend himself against such harmful and malicious backbiting. He was denounced by Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd²²⁹ to the influential chamberlain of al-Muqtadir, Naṣr al-Qushūrī. He was accused of Jahmite inclinations²³⁰ and extremist pro-'Alid views and was forced to issue a denial.

Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd had sent a memorandum (*qīṣṣah*) concerning Ṭabarī to Naṣr, the Chamberlain. It contained several things, which he (Ṭabarī) denied. Thus he attributed to him Jahmite opinions in interpreting Qur. 5:64 ("and His two hands are both stretched out"), in that he gave to "His two hands" the (metaphoric meaning) of "His two favors (*ni'matāh*)." (Ṭabarī) denied that and said, "I did not say that."²³¹ Another of those things was that (according to

2289, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 199 f. It must be left an open question whether the Ṣūfis' religious and ethical outlook appealed to him. It might very well have impressed him favorably to a certain degree. For a possible personal Ṣūfī contact, see below, n. 298.

228. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII.

229. Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, 'Abdallāh b. Sulaymān b. al-Ash'ath, lived from 230/844[5] to 316/929 and thus was about six years older than Ṭabarī and survived him by six years. See *TB*, IX, 464 ff., in particular, 467 f. On him and his father, see also above, n. 74. He competed with Ṭabarī in writing a Qur'ān commentary; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 232, l. 28 (see below, 110).

TB, loc. cit., has a statement which is interesting in connection with the history of the composition of *Faḍā'il* (below, 91). Abū Bakr is said to have always stressed that he was willing to forgive every critic except one who accused him of hatred for 'Alī (using the same expression as was used by Ṭabarī with respect to *bid'ah*; see below, n. 237). The reason for his remark was his awareness of being suspected of a well-concealed but deep aversion for 'Alī and his partisans. Ṭabarī shared this suspicion. When he learned that Abū Bakr was lecturing on the virtues (*faḍā'il*) of 'Alī, he made the snide remark: "Praise of God (a call to prayer) from a watchman (*takbirah min ḥāris*)!" This would seem to be a proverbial statement for someone who does not practice what he preaches. *Ḥāris* might mean here "thief" (see Lane, 546b).

The first appearance in *History* of Naṣr al-Qushūrī is text below, III, 2144, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 20, n. 114.

230. On Jahm and the Jahmiyyah, see *EP*, II, 388, s.v. Djahm, Djahmiyya.

231. Ṭabarī refers to this interpretation in *Tafsīr*, VI, 194, l. 25, mentioning no names but including it among interpretations of the dialecticians (*ahl al-jadal*, see below, n. 416). His long discussion suggests that he does not accept it. The decisive

Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd, Ṭabarī) transmitted the statement that the spirit of the messenger of God, when it left (him at death?), flowed into the palm of 'Alī who then covered (slowly swallowed?)²³² it. He (Ṭabarī, or rather Abū Bakr?) said that the *ḥadīth* says only that he wiped his face with it, and does not contain "covered (slowly swallowed?) it".

This author²³³ said: This is also absurd. However, Ibn Jarīr (Ṭabarī) wrote in reply to Naṣr, the Chamberlain: "There is no group in Islam like that contemptible group."²³⁴ This is an ugly remark for him to make. For while it is necessary for him to counter an adversary, it is ugly in the extreme to blame his entire sect (*ṭā'ifah*) when he knew²³⁵ who deserved to be blamed.²³⁶

The report is, unfortunately, not as clear and detailed as one might wish, but it illustrates Ṭabarī's dogmatic difficulties better than the general accusations of dogmatic heresy and extremist Shī'ah sympathies which we hear about mainly in connection with quarrels with the Ḥanbalites (who, in this case, presumably

element for Ṭabarī apparently was the use of the dual in "two hands," as against the immediately preceding "hand of God" in the singular. God's benefactions are innumerable, and this could be expressed by either the singular or the plural of *ni'mah*, but not by the dual. In *Tabṣīr*, fol. 88b, Ṭabarī explains the two hands as "stretched out with favors (*bi-al-ni'am*) for the creation, not withdrawn from the good."

232. The word is *ḥ-s-w* in the Hyderabad edition of Ibn al-Jawzī and *j-'y*, according to the introduction of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, I, 10, nn. 3 and 4; see Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCIX. The lexicographers, who tried hard to establish the meaning of *j-'y*, thought of "to conceal" as the principal meaning of the root; see, for instance, Azhari, *Tahdhib*, XI, 132 f.; Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān*, XVIII, 138 f. They apparently do not list the tradition. De Goeje gives the impression that they did; he may have had a reference to it. Until it is located elsewhere, it will be difficult to decide what is really involved here.

233. The historian Thābit b. Sinān, who continued Ṭabarī's *History* to a few years before his death in 365/976, is mentioned by Ibn al-Jawzī in the context, but the speaker here may rather be Ibn al-Jawzī himself. However, the criticism of Ṭabarī's unfairness in blaming the entire group for the error of one of its members is difficult to ascribe to Ibn al-Jawzī. Only the rejection of the tradition as "absurd" may go back to Ibn al-Jawzī, while the rest comes from his unidentified source(?).

234. The "group (*'iṣbah*)" is not named. Possibly, the students and sympathizers of Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd are meant(?).

235. Thus the Hyderabad edition of Ibn al-Jawzī. The text in Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., has "did not know," which is hardly correct.

236. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 172. The text in Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCVIII f., is taken from the Paris manuscript of the *Muntaẓam*.

cannot be held responsible).

There is every reason to assume that his dogmatic beliefs were basically those of the mainstream of "orthodox" Islam, as it was conceived, for instance, in the environment of Ibn Ḥanbal. Nothing to the contrary can be observed in his preserved dogmatic writings such as *Ṣariḥ* and *Tabṣīr*. He appears as an implacable foe of "innovations (*bid'ah*, pl. *bida'*)." When he was close to death and Ibn Kāmil asked him to pardon his enemies, he supposedly said that he would forgive them all except one individual who had accused him of "innovation". The person who had run afoul of him was his colleague Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Ṣawwāf (d. 310/December 925). He had objected to the praise which Ṭabarī showered on Abū Ḥanīfah, when he lectured on *Dhayl*.²³⁷ In general, Ṭabarī is described as unswerving in his faithful adherence to the orthodox views of the ancient Muslim scholars in "most of his dogmatic views (*jull madhāhibihī*)." The qualifying "most" implies that there were exceptions. Regrettably, they are not mentioned. Only the fundamental points of dogma championed by the Mu'tazilah, with which Ṭabarī firmly disagreed, are enumerated in this connection.²³⁸

The politically most explosive aspect of Muslim dogmatics always was the imāmate, the leadership of the Muslim state and community. In the time of Ṭabarī, the focus was on the claims made for 'Alī, his descendants, and the Shī'ah as the legitimate rulers of Islam.²³⁹ It is a moot question whether or not Shī'ism was numerically the majority party in the Muslim world at the time. It was the party that was out of power in most regions and, as far as the central government in Baghdad was concerned, it constituted a threat of subversion that had to be kept under control. Thus, the accusation of pro-Shī'ah sympathies was an easy

237. See *Irshād*, VI, 455, ll. 1-8, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 84. For al-Ṣawwāf, see *TB*, VII, 297 f. He was the one who boasted that he had been eating dried dates all his life, when Ṭabarī expounded upon their harmfulness (above, n. 150). Ṭabarī was vindicated when al-Ṣawwāf's teeth fell out, and he lost much weight; see *Irshād*, VI, 459 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 91.

238. See *Irshād*, VI, 453 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81 f.

239. Other sectarians, such as Khārijites and the pro-Umayyad Shī'ah, played a less important role, although they were by no means insignificant; see, for instance, below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 48 ff., for the pro-Umayyads, and *passim* for the Khārijites.

weapon against personal adversaries. Its effects probably varied greatly according to prevailing circumstances in each individual case. Sometimes, it could do permanent damage to the reputation of the accused. One of Ṭabarī's students, for example, Ibn Ayyūb (Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Muḥammad b. Ayyūb al-Qaṭṭān) was described to al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī as a sound transmitter of material from Ṭabarī but also as an extremist Shī'ite who held highly objectionable views. The Khaṭīb discussed the matter with another of his authorities who had studied with Ibn Ayyūb and was told by that person that he had never heard Ibn Ayyūb make unacceptable statements with pro-Shī'ah bias. His only crime was that he expressed himself in favor of recognizing 'Alī superior position (*tafdīl 'Alī*).²⁴⁰ This shows that Shī'ite tendencies could be deduced from open admiration of Alī. They could also be invented as malicious slander. In most cases, it is not possible for us to determine reasons and motivations. Old Ṭabarī appears to have been the victim of a campaign of slander by certain Ḥanbalites. They propagated the idea that he was a Shī'ah extremist and, ultimately, a heretic.²⁴¹ How successful they were, it is hard to say; quite a few people no doubt believed what they were told, although their numbers seem to have been inflated by rumor and tendentious reports. At any rate, there is not the slightest evidence for Ṭabarī's alleged Shī'ism. His roots in Ṭabaristān seem to have been in no way intertwined with local Shī'ism. His family rather belonged to the opposite camp.²⁴² If by any chance he harbored a deep down, secret animus against the 'Abbāsīd caliphate, he concealed it from his contemporaries as well as posterity. His works certainly do not support the accusation of Shī'ism or worse, though it must admitted that Ṭabarī would have avoided to mention things that might give reason to believe that the accusation was justified, even if it was. Opinions of his, such as the one ex-

240. See *TB*, V, 465. The Khaṭīb's informant on Ibn Ayyūb's alleged Shī'ism was his frequently cited authority Abū al-Qāsim al-Azhari [see Lassner, *Topography*, 234, n. 12, and index]. The lenient view was taken by Judge Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Dāwūdī (353–429/964–1038; see *TB*, III, 38).

241. As Miskawayh [see *Eclipse*, I, 84] states, this was the belief of the Ḥanbalite crowd (*al-'ammah*) who caused the riot at the time of this death. Strangely, he makes no comment on the matter. See also *Irshād*, VI, 423, l. 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 40, ll. 11 f. (see below, n. 292).

242. See also above, 13.

pressed in connection with wiping and washing in the ritual ablution, required considerable twisting in order to provide minimal support for it.²⁴³

The biographical sources depict him as a stout defender of the preeminence of all the first four caliphs. He felt compelled to defend 'Alī against attacks and took every opportunity to profess his veneration of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. In a discussion with a certain Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-A'lam about 'Alī, Ṭabarī asked him what he thought about those who claimed that Abū Bakr and 'Umar were not legitimate caliphs (*imāmā hudā*). Al-A'lam replied that such claim was an "innovation." Considering Ṭabarī's rejection of any thought of *bid'ah*, that should perhaps have pleased him, but he was outraged by the reply and empathically insisted that it was not strong enough. Anyone who did not acknowledge the exalted status of the first two caliphs ought to be killed.²⁴⁴ Reports of this sort could have been invented as a reaction to Ḥanbalite attacks, but Ṭabarī's orthodoxy with respect to the imāmate and Shī'ah beliefs seems to be beyond doubt.

Ṭabarī's struggle with the Ḥanbalites might be seen as a consequence of his independent judgment in matters of law. Just as pronouncements on points of Qur'ān interpretation must have made enemies for him among those who differed from his conclusions—and the competition was strong, as there were numerous Qur'ān scholars around and numerous laymen who had their own opinions on everything connected with the Qur'ān—anyone who insisted upon his own juridical and dogmatic views could expect to encounter determined hostility. Two such hostile encounters, the vicious Ḥanbalite attacks and the less grave conflict with the Zāhirites, will be discussed later in some detail.

Ṭabarī at first considered himself a Shāfi'ite, and many later Shāfi'ites were proud to claim him as one of their own.²⁴⁵ For a

243. See above, 56 f.

244. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, quoted in a slightly shortened form by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 275. Dhahabī's dependence on Ibn 'Asākir can hardly be doubted, but it remains to be explained why he replaced Abū al-Faṭḥ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ḥāfiẓ in the *isnād* by the equally correct form Abū al-Faṭḥ b. Abī al-Fawāris (see *TB*, I, 352 f.). Dhahabī might have used an intermediate source, unless our text of Ibn 'Asākir is faulty(?).

245. See Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 251. The opinions of al-Rāfi'ī and Abū 'Āṣim al-'Abbādi on Ṭabarī's position among Shāfi'ites were reported by Nawawī, *Tahdhīb*,

period of ten years, he functioned as a Shāfi'ite.²⁴⁶ This may have been after his return from Egypt, and thus in the decade that ended about 267/880(1). By then, his own legal production had become extensive. His *Laṭīf* was a comprehensive exposition of both the basic principles (*uṣūl*) and the case law (*furū'*) of presumably the entire shari'ah; at least parts of the work were then already in existence. Given his *ijtihād*, the legal views expressed in it must have included many which, not by themselves but in the aggregate, set Ṭabarī's legal thought apart from the other legal schools of his time. It was therefore a natural development for him and his circle of students to constitute themselves into a special legal school, the "Jarīrī *madhhab*." The phrase "our *madhhab*" used in *Ikhtilāf*²⁴⁷ in one place apparently does not understand *madhhab* as the view under discussion but refers to his "school"; however, because of the uncertainties connected with the dating of *Ikhtilāf*, the passage does not provide us with a *terminus ante quem* for the formal birth of the Jarīrī *madhhab*. Naming a sect or school after the father of the founder was a common practice. With respect to "Jarīrī", it is clear that neither Ṭabarī's given name nor the name of his country of origin would have made a distinctive designation for the school. It is not known, however, when the name "Jarīrī" was introduced, nor is there any precise information as to when the outside world began to look at Ṭabarī as the founder of his *madhhab*.

During his later years, his students were considered Jarīrīs or considered themselves as followers of Ṭabarī's legal views. Some wrote works on the Jarīrī *madhhab* or in defense of it. One of these Jarīrīs was considerably older than Ṭabarī, which is a testimony to Ṭabarī's reputation and, perhaps, his personal magnetism. He was Abū Muslim al-Kajjī, who was born in 200/815[6] and died in 292/904[5]. An authority on Qur'ān interpretation, he was an extraordinarily successful teacher. He had large numbers of students and is said to have employed no less than seven *mustamlis*. Many of the students were standing with their inkpots in their hands during his lectures, because they could not be accommodated in

I, 70. See 'Abbādī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 52. Al-'Abbādī has even less biographical information than Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 76.

246. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIV, from al-Farghānī.

247. Ed. Kern, II, 61.

the normal manner.²⁴⁸ It probably was important for Ṭabarī to have a man of this stature as a follower of his *madhhab*. Others identifiable as belonging to the early core of Jarīris during their master's lifetime were the government official (*kātib*) Ibn Abī al-Thalj (238-322/852[3]-934)²⁴⁹ and Abū al-Ḥasan Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. 'Alī b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Maṣṣūr, who died in his early seventies in the year 327/938[9]. He was a member of the Ibn Munajjim family, and his pedigree clarifies his position in it. The Ibn Munajjims had produced several generations of courtiers and litterateurs. Some were also well-known as speculative theologians. Abū al-Ḥasan wrote *An Introduction to and support of Ṭabarī's school* as well as other works on his *madhhab*.²⁵⁰

Aḥmad b. Kāmil, Ṭabarī's biographer, also belonged to the original group of Jarīris. As a judge in al-Kūfah under the jurisdiction of the chief judge in Baghdad, Ibn Kāmil was in the position to promote the legal school to which he belonged. It seems, however, that he was a somewhat self-important and difficult personality. His juridical views were said to have been eclectic and in a way probably produced yet another legal school.²⁵¹

The best known Jarīrī of the next generation who no longer had personal contact with Ṭabarī was al-Mu'āfā b. Zakariyyā' al-Nahrawānī, also referred to as Ibn Ṭarrār al-Jarīrī. Among other works, al-Mu'āfā wrote a large commentary on the Qur'ān; but his fame among posterity derived mainly from a literary work,

248. Also Kashshī or Kachchī, Abū Muslim Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh b. Muslim has an entry in *TB*, VI, 120-4. He appears as Ṭabarī's authority in *Tafsīr*, II, 152 f., 233, I, 22, and 234, I, 6 (*ad Qur.* 2:197, 233); IV, 15, I, 12 (*ad Qur.* 3:97). Another scholar older than Ṭabarī but a transmitter of material from him was Abū Shu'ayb 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan (206-95/821[2]-907[8]). See Ibn 'Asākir, LXIX f.; *TB*, IX, 435-7. However, he does not appear to have been a Jarīrī.

249. See *TB*, I, 338.

250. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 143 f.; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, VIII, 246 f.; Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 164; Sezgin, *GAS*, II, 439; Stern, "Abū 'Īsā," 438. Ibn al-Nadīm also listed him among the Mu'tazilah; see Fück, "Neue Materialien," 307, and Dodge's translation of the *Fihrist*, I, 428 f.

One wonders whether Ṭabarī's interest in "time" (see below, translation, 159 and 169 ff.) was in any way connected with the *Kitāb al-Awqāt* written by Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Munajjim or with the *Kitāb al-Zamān* of Ibn Kāmil (see *Irshād*, II, 17, ed. Rifā'i, IV, 105. *Irshād* cites *Fihrist*, where, however, this title and some other titles of Ibn Kāmil's publications do not appear on p. 32).

251. For Ibn Kāmil as a Jarīrī, see also below, 67. For another old Jarīrī, see above, n. 14.

entitled *al-Jalīs al-ṣāliḥ al-kāfī wa-al-anīs al-nāṣiḥ al-shāfī* (cited here as Mu'āfā, *Jalīs*). He served as judge for Bāb al-Ṭāq, a section of Baghdad which enjoyed long-standing fame as a center of literary and scholarly activity. In Yāqūt's words, al-Mu'āfā attempted to promote the Jarīrī *madhhab* by supporting (as Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Munajjim had done), calling attention to, and defending it.²⁵²

The Jarīrī *madhhab* never gained a foothold strong enough to guarantee its survival in the harshly competitive world of politics dominated by the large and powerful legal sector of society. As Ibn Kāmil's career exemplifies, there were many persons practicing *ijtihād* and acting as potential founders of schools. Understandably, the competition was particularly brutal in the capital of the Empire, but even a powerful provincial base, such as had been enjoyed by al-Awzā'ī, often failed to ensure success. From all we know, it appears that Jarīrism was not distinctive enough to make it on purely intellectual grounds, and its followers were not sufficiently aggressive, or lacked political opportunity, to infiltrate the judiciary on a large scale so as to acquire the momentum necessary for gaining and perpetuating power,

By the time of Ṭabarī, certain legal schools, such as the Ḥanafites, Mālikites, and Shāfi'ites, had become firmly entrenched and, as history was to show, could no longer be displaced. Wherever there was acute rivalry for political control through the judiciary, the atmosphere was easily poisoned, and often lasting division resulted that affected even personal relations.²⁵³ Normally, however, a certain harmony appears at least outwardly to have been prevalent. A debate about whether the formula "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate (*basmalah*)" was

252. On al-Mu'āfā, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 236; *Irshād*, VII, 162–4, ed. Rifā'i, XIX, 151–4; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 522 f.

Makhlad b. Ja'far al-Bāqarī (d. 370/981) supposedly studied with Ṭabarī and, at the end of his life, claimed the right to (the transmission of?) Ṭabarī's *History*. Nothing is said about his having been a Jarīrī, but his son Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm (325–410/937–1020) was so described. See *TB*, XIII, 176 f., and VI, 189–91, in particular, 190, l. 3. For their role in the transmission of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurūṣiyyah*, see below, 123 f. Further Jarīris mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm, 135, cannot be traced elsewhere. Lists of Jarīris compiled by modern scholars may be found, for instance, in the introduction to the edition of Mu'āfā, *Jalīs*, I, 44.

253. An example on the large scale is the apparent gradual development of bad relations between Ḥanafites and Shāfi'ites in Nisābūr during the fourth/tenth century, see Bulliet, *Patricians*, 31 ff.

to be counted as part of the first sūrah of the Qur'ān that took place not long after Ṭabarī's death, is a good illustration of the generally peaceful state of affairs.

Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: One night, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. al-'Abbās b. Mujāhid came to us, while we were studying with him the large work on the Qur'ān reading of Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā'.²⁵⁴ He found us engaged in a debate with some Shāfi'ite colleagues as to whether the *basmalah* belonged to the Book or did not belong to it. The meeting room was crowded with Shāfi'ites, Mālikites, Ḥanafites, and our colleagues (that is, Jarīris). Because of my studying (Qur'ān reading) with him, Ibn Mujāhid occasionally called me Kisā'ī.²⁵⁵ So now he said to me: What is it that all of you here are engaged in? I told him, and he said: To which juridical school do you belong? I replied: That of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī. He said: May God show mercy to (the late) Abū Ja'far! He told us the *ḥadīth* of Nūḥ b. Abī Bilāl—Sa'id al-Maqbūrī—Abū Hurayrah about the *basmalah*.²⁵⁶

Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid then started to praise Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī. He said: We have heard that he met with al-Muzanī, but don't ask how he bested him with all those Shāfi'ites present who were listening to him! (Ibn Mujāhid) did not mention anything that happened between the two.

254. Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā', one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived roughly from the 60s/684–9 to about 154/770. See, for instance, *EF*², I, 105 f., s. v.; Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 158; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 5 f., 17; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, I, 288–92. According to Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 31, Ibn Mujāhid (see above, n. 121) wrote a large and a small work on Qur'ān reading, as well as a work on the Qur'ān reading of Abū 'Amr. This work is probably the one meant here. The scene described is a meeting of some of those who were students of Ibn Mujāhid in Qur'ān reading, at which Ibn Mujāhid dropped in. He should have known, however, that Ibn Kāmil was a Jarīri without having to ask him on that particular occasion. Perhaps the plural is meant, so that the question was about others in the gathering.

255. Ibn Mujāhid, who was known for his friendly banter (*mudā'abah*), is comparing his gifted student Ibn Kāmil with the famous second/eighth-century Qur'ān reader and philologist, see *EF*², V, 174 f., s. v. al-Kisā'ī. Ibn Mujāhid's authority Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā known as the younger Kisā'ī (see Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 279) is hardly meant.

256. For Ṭabarī on the *basmalah*, see *Tafsīr*, I, 37, where he refers back to *Laṭīf* and promises an exhaustive treatment for a later major work; see below, 113. The Prophet's *ḥadīth* on the various names of the first sūrah (*Tafsīr*, I, 36, ll. 22 ff.) may not be the one meant here.

Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: I (had earlier?) asked Abū Ja'far about the problem he had debated with al-Muzanī, but he did not mention it. He was not the person to boast about having gained the better of an adversary²⁵⁷ in a discussion. Abū Ja'far used to stress al-Muzanī's excellence; he praised him and always said what a good Muslim he was.²⁵⁸

Ṭabarī's altercation with Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī (255–97/869–910), the son of the founder of the Zāhirite school, was potentially troublesome, but ended peaceably. Basically, it reflects an amicable environment in which scholars of different outlooks in the fields of law and *ḥadīth* lived and worked together. Dāwūd b. 'Alī (200[2]–70/815[8]–84) did not, we are told, measure up to Ṭabarī's all encompassing scholarship. He was an excellent, highly skilled debater. He also tended toward exhibiting a certain playfulness. Ṭabarī found it totally out of place whenever serious scholarly problems were under discussion. He studied with Dāwūd for some time and copied many of his works and lectures. After his death, as many as eighty fascicles of Dāwūd's treatises were found, written in Ṭabarī's fine hand.²⁵⁹ Among them was a discussion of a subject that continued to be hotly debated, that of the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. It had taken place between Dāwūd and the Muṭazilite Abū Mujālid al-Ḍarīr in the time of al-Muwaffaq, that is, in the last decade of Dāwūd's life.²⁶⁰ Once, apparently near the end of Dāwūd's life, Ṭabarī got the better of him in a debate held in the presence of Dāwūd's followers. One of them, provoked by seeing his master being defeated, made some acerbic remarks against Ṭabarī who left in a huff and wrote a treatise against Dāwūd. Dāwūd's son Abū Bakr came to his father's aid, apparently shortly after the latter's death. Like Ṭabarī,

257. Following the emendation in *Irshād*, ed. Rifā'ī.

258. See *Irshād*, VI, 433, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 53 f. See also above, n. 101.

259. It is conceivable, as suggested by the paragraphing of the text in *Irshād*, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 78, that the reference is to Dāwūd and his library and fine hand, but this seems unlikely.

260. Abū Mujālid Ahmad b. al-Husayn, an active Muṭazilite and a client of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim, died in 268/862, according to Ibn Kāmil, rather than in the following year. See *TB*, IV, 95 f.; Ṣafadī, *Wafī*, VI, 33 (where 270 is indicated as the date of death); 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-khamsah*, 294 (with further references). For Ṭabarī's views on the subject, see, in particular, *Tabṣīr*, fols. 101a–102a, and *Ṣarīḥ*, passim.

Abū Bakr had been a precocious child. At the age of sixteen, he took over his deceased father's teaching (*ḥalqah*) and issued legal opinions (*fatwā*).²⁶¹ He often seems to have done so in the same lighthearted spirit which led to the composition of his most famous work, an anthology of love poetry entitled *Kitāb al-Zahrah*. It is possible that his *Kitāb al-Intiṣār 'alā Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī* was the work in defense of his father.²⁶² Abū Bakr also attacked Ṭabarī in a work of his on the principles of jurisprudence (*al-Wuṣūl ilā ma'rifat al-uṣūl*). The issue was the interpretation of consensus (*ijmā'*). In *Ikhtilāf*, he alleged, Ṭabarī defined consensus as the agreement only of those legal authorities whose views he discussed in that work. Abū Bakr, insisting on *ijmā'* as the consensus of all legal authorities, seems to have taken this definition as Ṭabarī's general view on *ijmā'* beyond that particular work.²⁶³ The controversy went on for a long time. Then one day, when Abū Bakr by chance visited a common acquaintance named Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid, Ṭabarī happened to be there, too. He was Abū Bakr b. Dāwūd's elder by thirty years, but he treated him with the greatest courtesy and remembered his father with high praise. This put an end to their hostility.²⁶⁴

Ṭabarī's relationship with the Ḥanbalites was of a totally different character. It is pictured as having had an important and disturbing impact on his life. This seems, in fact, to have been the case in some respect. The reports we have about it are all close to his time, but they are confused and contradictory. Their historicity has been denied.²⁶⁵ However, while they reflect propaganda and appear to have been put into circulation by Ṭabarī's Ḥanbalite opponents, there is no good reason to go quite that far.

What caused the enmity of contemporary Ḥanbalites toward

261. See *TB*, V, 256, l. 13.

262. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, VIII, 255, ed. Pellat, V, 196; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 217, l. 28. The suggestion, made *ad* Ibn 'Asākir, LXXVII, n. g, that the author of *Intiṣār* was Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd is unsupportable.

263. The Ṭāhirite view of *ijmā'* is discussed in Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 32 ff.

264. For a translation of the report on the episode, see below, 121 ff. It may be noted that there was bitter animosity between Ibn Ḥanbal and Dāwūd which was started by the former, see *TB*, VIII, 373 f., quoted by Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 130; Goldziher, *Zāhiriten*, 134.

265. See Kern's introduction to his edition of *Ikhtilāf*, 8 f. Kern's biographical sketch of Ṭabarī there and in his article on *Ikhtilāf* was an astonishing accomplishment in its time.

Ṭabarī? He was originally attracted to Baghdad by the fame of Ibn Ḥanbal,²⁶⁶ and he continued to express the greatest respect for him.²⁶⁷ His authorities and older contemporaries were students of Ibn Ḥanbal. Ibn Ḥanbal's younger son 'Abdallāh (213-90/828[9]-903),²⁶⁸ who was the chief transmitter of his father's large collection of traditions, was only ten years older than Ṭabarī, and there was a constant overlap between 'Abdallāh's and Ṭabarī's teachers. Direct contact between Ṭabarī and Ibn Ḥanbal's family appears not to be attested, but they must have known one another. The final break between him and the Ḥanbalites is likely to have occurred with the publication of *Ikhtilāf*, which completely disregards Ibn Ḥanbal.²⁶⁹ Ṭabarī is alleged to have expressed the opinion that he did not think of Ibn Ḥanbal as a jurist whose work in the field of jurisprudence compared with that of other great authorities but rather as an important *ḥadīth* scholar.²⁷⁰ This observation is quite accurate and was endorsed by posterity as well as shared by some Ḥanbalites. It is, however, understandable that it could have led to riots if it was ever expressed *ex cathedra*. Another statement to the effect that he had not seen anyone transmitting legal opinions from Ibn Ḥanbal or any followers of his that were considered authoritative²⁷¹ was a slap in the face of contemporary Ḥanbalites. Ṭabarī may not have been so imprudent as to make these remarks in public in the form in which they are preserved; they may have surfaced in Ḥanbalite attacks against him and reflect Ḥanbalite suspicion as to how he felt about their school.

Another, and possibly decisive, factor was the situation in

266. See above, n. 44.

267. See *Ṣariḥ*, text, 198, trans., 191. For the strange report on an apology full of praise for Ibn Ḥanbal and his school, see below, 104.

268. One of the authorities for the dates of 'Abdallāh's birth and death was al-Ṣawwāf, on whom see above, n. 237. Like Ibn Kāmil, al-Ṣawwāf was a student of 'Abdallāh. See *TB*, IX, 376, ll. 14 f.

269. The only reference to Ibn Ḥanbal ('Abū 'Abdallāh') traced so far in *Ikhtilāf* is an indirect one; see ed. Schacht, 139, l. 14, and Schacht's introduction, XV.

270. Since the basic sources do not seem to mention this remark, its historicity is slightly suspect. According to Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ihtilāf*," 66, l. 1, the authorities mentioning it are Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*; Abū al-Fidā', *Annales*; Ibn al-Shihnah (in the margin of Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Būlāq, 1290, VIII, 110), all under the year 310, and Ḥajjī Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 33. When it came to enumerate the fields in which Ibn Ḥanbal was a leading authority, mention of him as *imām al-ḥadīth* came first; see Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Tabaqāt*, I, 5.

271. See *Irshād*, VI, 436, ll. 5 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 58.

which Hanbalism found itself in Ṭabarī's time. It was the latest of the then prominent and active legal schools²⁷² and was still struggling to become securely established when Ṭabarī, along with others, was a potential rival. The Hanbalites, moreover, counted in their ranks fighters determined to the point of fanaticism to promote themselves and their *madhhab*. Their readiness to use violence was effective as a deterrent to many scholars; they may have been less courageous than Ṭabarī, who refused to be intimidated.²⁷³

The Hanbalite struggle for ultimate success required a rallying point in the form of a slogan that could serve as a touchstone for true belief. A strange interpretation of the "praiseworthy position (*maqāman maḥmūdān*)" promised to the Prophet in Qur. 17:79 was chosen. It should be remembered that in Ibn Ḥanbal's life, the issue of the createdness or uncreatedness of the Holy Book had played a similar role. That issue was, of course, vastly more important, but it may not be quite as farfetched as it seems that his followers unconsciously felt that they, too, needed a dramatic issue to make themselves heard in the rough-and-tumble of religious politics.

Qur'ān 17:79 was generally explained as eschatological²⁷⁴ and the "praiseworthy position" as referring to Muḥammad's role as intercessor with the Deity on the Last Day. There was, however, a tradition reported from Mujāhid (but not found in the preserved recension of his commentary on Qur. 17:79) which reached Ṭabarī by way of 'Abbād b. Ya'qūb al-Asadī—Muḥammad b. Fuḍayl—Layth b. Abī Sulaym. It states that the "praiseworthy position" means that Muḥammad will be seated by God on his divine Throne.²⁷⁵ Hanbalite championship of the tradi-

272. The latest authority frequently quoted in *Ikhtilāf* is the Shāfi'ite Abū Thawr (Ibrāhīm b. Khālid), who died in 240/854, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 491.

273. A number of contemporaries who did not want to tangle with Mujāhid's tradition are named in Dhahabī, *'Uluww*, 124-6; see also 75, 94, 99. It seems they did not offer resistance as Ṭabarī did eventually, even if, as was his nature, he too compromised on the issue for some time. The father of Abū Bakr, Abū Dāwūd al-Sijistānī, is mentioned as an advocate of the permissibility of transmitting Mujāhid's tradition in Khallāl, *Musnad*, and Qurtubī, *Jāmi'*, X, 311.

274. In fact, the eschatological meaning of the verse does not seem certain and appears to be based solely on the use of the root *b-'-th*.

275. For the transmitters, see below, translation, nn. 1139, 239, and 54. Al-Layth is described as the son of Abū Sulaym in Khallāl, *Musnad*, and Dhahabī, *'Uluww*,

tion produced vehement outpourings of hatred against those who opposed it, allegedly with equal immoderation. They were called by every conceivable epithet; they were branded as innovators, liars, ignoramuses, heretics (*zindīq*), and unbelievers. Above all, they were seen as Jahmīs, that is, speculative theologians (Mu'tazilites). Their nefarious intent—or, at any rate, the result of their attitude—was to deny a singular distinction to the Prophet, and, in the process, they defamed the exemplary Muslim that was Mujāhid. Already Ibn Ḥanbal's principal successor as spokesman for his legal school, Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī (d. 275/888),²⁷⁶ was strongly partial to Mujāhid's tradition and appears to have employed the "praiseworthy position" question as a sort of shibboleth. Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī's student and successor as the principal Ḥanbalite scholar of his time, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl (d. 311/923), took up the subject. He reproduced his teacher's arguments at length and thus preserved them for posterity.²⁷⁷ His younger contemporary, al-Barbahārī (d. 329/941),²⁷⁸ then made the most of it. He missed no opportunity to proclaim Qur. 17:79 as referring to the Prophet's being seated on the divine Throne. Although al-Barbahārī's name is not mentioned in connection with Ṭabarī's Ḥanbalite trouble, he probably must be seen as the person behind much of it.

125, l. 3. He was a transmitter of Mujāhid; the better-known al-Layth b. Sa'd was born too late for that.

This interpretation is, of course, not incompatible with Muḥammad's position as chief intercessor. See Khallāl, *Musnad*, 83.

276. For Abū Bakr Ahmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Hajjāj al-Marrūdhī, see Ibn Abī Ya'la, *Ṭabaqāt*, I, 56–63; Sam'āni, *Ansāb*, XII, 201 f.; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, IV, 506, s. v. Marw al-Rūdh. According to Dhahabī, 'Uluww, 125, l. 2, he wrote in defense of Mujāhid's tradition [see below, n. 277]. Ibn Abī Ya'la, *Ṭabaqāt*, 60, states that al-Marrūdhī was asked about the Jahmiyyah's rejection of the "story of the Throne." This may refer to alleged Mu'tazilah views on the location of the Throne, rather than, specifically, to the tradition of Mujāhid.

277. For Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 511 f. I wish to thank J. van Ess for providing me with a xerox copy of Khallāl, *Musnad*, 75–99.

278. For al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī b. Khalaf al-Barbahārī, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 512; Laoust, in *Mélanges Massignon*, III, 22–5. Ibn Abī Ya'la, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 18–45, gives a good picture of his generally extremist positions. "Whenever al-Barbahārī attended a meeting, he would mention that God seats Muḥammad with Himself on the Throne." In 323/935, he was in hiding and his followers were strictly forbidden to assemble. One of them was accused of having set a disastrous fire in al-Karkh, see Hamadhāni, *Takmilah*, 79 f., ed. Cairo, XI, 294–6. See further Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 344, and the indexes of *Eclipse* and Massignon, *Passion*², as well as Allard, *Attributs*, 103 f.

The actual course of the events affecting Ṭabarī can be reconstructed only with difficulty, because supporters on both sides apparently circulated conflicting reports. Matters appear to have come to a head after the year 290/903. In that year, Ṭabarī returned to his home town in Tabaristān on a second, and apparently last, visit. He no doubt used the Khurāsān Road that took him through such large cities as Dīnawar and Hamadhān. In Dīnawar, he stopped to meet with scholars there and to give lectures; he may very well have done the same in other towns along the road, thus making his journey profitable intellectually and, possibly, economically. On his return to Baghdad, three Ḥanbalites, who do not seem further identifiable,²⁷⁹ asked Ṭabarī about his views on Mujāhid's tradition. Ṭabarī is said to have declared bluntly that it was absurd. Moreover, he added a flippant jingle ridiculing it:

Praised be the One Who has no confidant
and has no one to sit on His Throne.

Enraged Ḥanbalites thereupon stoned his residence and caused a serious disturbance which had to be subdued by force.

Trouble with the Ḥanbalites that took a similar form is also reported at the time of Ṭabarī's death. In connection with it, Nāzūk is mentioned as chief of police. He was appointed to this position only in 310/922[3], the year Ṭabarī died, but he appears to have held high positions in the police before and may already have been in charge of Ṭabarī's protection against potential Ḥanbalite violence. In 309/921[2], the wazīr 'Alī b. 'Īsā had offered Ṭabarī the opportunity to debate the matter with the Ḥanbalites in his residence. Ṭabarī agreed, but the Ḥanbalites did not show up.²⁸⁰ However, shortly before his death, Ḥanbalite rioters supposedly

279. The three were Abū 'Abdallāh al-Jaṣṣās, Ja'far b. 'Arafah, and al-Bayāḍī. The identification of al-Bayāḍī with Abū 'Alī Muḥammad b. 'Īsā al-Bayāḍī was proposed by the editor of *Irshād*, VI, 436, n. 1, but requires confirmation. This individual, whose family claimed 'Abbāsīd descent, wrote on Qur'ān reading. He was killed by the Qarmatians in 294/906 on his return from the pilgrimage, see *TB*, II, 401; Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, 384.

On the incident, see also Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, II, 158 (II, 168, of the original German). Goldziher's reference was to Suyūṭī, *Tahdhīr*, 161, whose source scurrilously attributes this information to a storyteller in the streets of Baghdad.

280. See Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 159, also Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XCVIII, Bowen, 187 f.

pelted his house with stones so numerous that they formed a large wall in front of it. The verse just quoted was discovered written on the wall of Ṭabarī's house. After the riot subsided, someone wrote underneath it:

Aḥmad²⁸¹ will no doubt have a high position
when he comes to the Merciful One,

Who will draw him near and seat him nobly
to spite an(y) envier,

Upon a throne enveloping him²⁸² with perfume
to make livid an(y) obnoxious liar.

(He has) truly this unique position (*al-maqām*).

This has been transmitted by Layth from Mujāhid.

Inscriptions in verse or prose on the walls of houses are a standard device of the Arabic literary imagination. It seems most unlikely that a man in Ṭabarī's position and at his advanced age would have been so childish as to write inflammatory verses on the walls of his house. Someone else might have done it in order to provoke the Ḥanbalite mob. Presumably, however, the mural poetry was a literary embellishment invented by Ḥanbalites which crept into the vague reports about the event.²⁸³ The fact that historians report another bloody incident about *maqāman maḥmūdan* involving followers of the late Abū Bakr al-Marrūdhī for the year 317/929²⁸⁴ neither confirms nor invalidates the historicity of the

281. "Aḥmad" apparently is meant to refer to the Prophet, but Ibn Ḥanbal's name was also Aḥmad. The undetermined singular of envier and liar in the following verses might be a veiled reference to a specific person, namely, Ṭabarī.

282. The translation "upon a throne enveloped with perfume" is possible, but the text in Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ*, I, 656, ll. 4 f. (Beirut, 1963) = III, 224, ll. 15 f. (Cairo, 1379/1959), speaks against it.

283. The entire preceding account is not in TB and Ibn 'Asākir. It appears in *Irshād*, VI, 436, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 57-9, and (quoted by?) Ṣafādī, *Wafī*, II, 286 f. See also Kern's introduction to his edition of *Ikhtilāf*, 8 f.

284. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, VIII, 157 f., and, with only minor differences, a Berlin manuscript described as al-Birzālī's *History* and quoted in the introduction of *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern, 9. The incident is, however, unreported in the other sources consulted by me. Schreiner, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 436 f. (= ZDMG 52 [1898], 535 f.), refers to a ninth/fifteenth-century author.

event involving Ṭabarī.

The circumstances surrounding the debate about the "praiseworthy position" deserve some more clarification. In his *Musnad*, Ibn Ḥanbal includes no traditions that support the interpretation of the phrase as referring to the Prophet's being seated on the divine Throne.²⁸⁵ One might argue that the very fact that Ibn Ḥanbal has nothing to say about the impossibility of Mujaḥid's interpretation could indicate that it could not be ruled out, using a type of argument employed by Ṭabarī in his discussion of the matter. This, however, is very unlikely. Ibn Ḥanbal may have simply disregarded Mujaḥid's tradition as irrelevant or objectionable. After all, it had no *isnād* going back to more ancient authorities or the Prophet, while there were traditions having the Prophet's seal of approval that referred to intercession. Clearly, this made it necessary to invent an appropriate Prophetical tradition for Muḥammad's place on the divine Throne, and this was done. Ibn Battah (d. 387/997) listed one such tradition with the *isnād* Nāfi'—'Abdallāh b. 'Umar—the Prophet.²⁸⁶ He is certain not to have invented it himself. When it made its first appearance is hard to say; evidently, Abū Bakr al-Khallāl in the early years of the century did not yet know it.

In *Tafsīr*, Ṭabarī has a long and interesting discussion of the "praiseworthy position."²⁸⁷ It again shows him to be the great compromiser. He admits that intercession is the interpretation that is solidly documented and which therefore has the best claim to being correct. However, he says, the other interpretation cannot entirely be ruled out. As the composition of *Tafsīr* antedates

285. See Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, I, 375 f., 398 f., III, 354, for traditions on intercession. For the tradition of Gabriel sitting "on a footstool" or "on the throne," presumably the divine Throne, between heaven and earth, see Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, III, 306; Ibn Hajar, *Fath*, X, 305.

286. See Laoust, *Profession de foi d'Ibn Batta*, text, 61, trans., 112 f., especially note 1. In addition to Mujaḥid, al-Wāḥidī (d. 468/1075) refers to a tradition of Ibn Mas'ūd, see Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, XXI, 32. He may have the same tradition in mind, mixing up, as it sometimes happens, 'Abdallāh b. 'Umar and 'Abdallah b. Mas'ūd. A tradition of 'Ā'ishah on the subject is discussed in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Daf*, 81, *ḥadīth* no. 39.

287. See *Tafsīr*, XV, 97, l. 10–100, l. 22. See the translation below, Appendix A, below, pp. 149–51. For another partial translation, see Andrae, *Person*, 270–2. For Ṭabarī's real feelings about Mujaḥid and his tradition, it may be indicative that he rejects a view expressed by him with unusual harshness in connection with his commentary on the same verse of the Qur'ān, see *Tafsīr*, XV, 96, ll. 26–31.

the events described, it might be argued that Ṭabarī interpolated the discussion in *Tafsīr* after publication when Ḥanbalite hostility took such a truly ugly turn.²⁸⁸ This cannot be proved. It might be assumed that he took at first a conciliatory attitude such as is displayed in *Tafsīr* and renounced it at some later date when he got disgusted with Ḥanbalite violence. This seems more likely, but again there is no hard evidence for it. Whatever it was, the view expressed in *Tafsīr* did nothing to assuage Ḥanbalite opposition to him which appears to have had deeper roots than merely disagreement about a catchy slogan.

The arguments marshalled by Ṭabarī for the purpose of making Mujāhid's tradition admissible were derived from speculative theology and show him adept in its ways of thinking and debating. The basic issue, as he sees it, is the problem of contiguity (*mumāssah*). It had its proper place in physics but was transferred to theology by religious thinkers.²⁸⁹ Al-Ash'arī (ca 260–324/873[4]–935[6]), who lived most of his life in al-Baṣrah and was but a generation removed from Ṭabarī, considered the matter important enough to refer to it in his discussion of anthropomorphism (*tajsīm*). God is not upon the Throne, except in the sense that He is above it but does not touch it. According to Hishām b. al-Hakam, God's location is in one specific place (*fī makān dūn makān*). His place is the Throne, and He is in touch with it. The Throne encompasses and delimits Him. Another view holds that the Creator fills the Throne and is in touch with it. At this point, al-Ash'arī adds that some *ḥadīth* scholars hold that the Throne is not filled by Him and that He (is thus able to) seat His Prophet with Himself on the Throne.²⁹⁰ Ṭabarī considers the problem of God completely filling the Throne. He remarks on His contiguity and finds that only three possibilities apply to it. For him, however, the crucial point that must be made is that God's seating of Muḥammad on the Throne, with or without Himself, does not imply divinity ("lordship" *rubūbiyyah*) for the Prophet or deny his status as a human being ("servantship" *'ubūdiyyah*). In fact,

288. The information that he went even a step farther and apologized to the Ḥanbalites is suspect, see below, 104 f.

289. See Pines, *Atomenlehre*, 8 f., and, for instance, Juwaynī, *Shāmīl*, 455 ff.

290. See Ash'arī, *Maqālāt*, 210 f., and, in different connections, 35, 155, 221, 301–4.

the implied hint at Muḥammadan divinity would appear to be the most objectionable feature of Mujāhid's tradition. In touching upon this aspect, Ṭabarī comes close to the possible reason why Mujāhid might have made this seemingly un-Islamic statement. Christianity speaks of the Son not only as sitting on a throne but also of some mysterious being as sitting together with the Father in His Throne (Rev. 3:21). Even in remote Mecca, Mujāhid could have heard about these views or seen one of the many representations of the Trinity or the enthroned Christ.²⁹¹ He may very well have felt that Muḥammad should be similarly distinguished as was the prophet of Christianity.

The Ḥanbalites were probably to be blamed for occasional difficulties Ṭabarī experienced in scheduling his lectures and for deterring a few out-of-town students from attending them or otherwise receiving instruction from him. Those who knew Ṭabarī best always played down the inconveniences he suffered from the Ḥanbalites. Considerable uncertainty attaches to the reports of what went on at the time of his death. Ṭabarī is said to have been virtually prevented from leaving his house. When he died, some questionable sources report that it was necessary to bury him "at night"²⁹² in his courtyard, apparently in order to forestall any untoward incidents at the funeral. It was not unusual for individuals to be buried in their houses,²⁹³ but it would not have been done ordinarily under the cover of darkness. If there was in-

291. Not much can be made in this connection of the allegation that Mujāhid used material provided by Christians and Jews in his Qur'ān commentary. See Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, V, 344, l. 7, and the remark transmitted through Abū Bakr b. 'Ayyāsh (below, translation, n. 72) in Dhahabī, *Mizān*, III, 439; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, X, 43; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 29. As one would expect, Dhahabī refers to Mujāhid's view of *maqāman mahmūdān* with disapproval.

On Mujāhid and the vibrating of the divine Throne, see Goldziher, *Richtungen*, 108 f.

A similar but different idea was already expressed in Khallāl, *Musnad*, 82. The Muslims would be the laughing stock of Christians if they denied to Muḥammad the honor of sitting on the divine Throne, while granting semidivine status to Jesus.

292. This key element appears in Miskawayh, *Eclipse*, I, 84; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntazam*, VI, 172; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, VIII, 98; *Irshād*, VI, 423, l. 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 40, ll. 11 f. Yāqūt remarks that he had this information from an unspecified source. The principal sources agree that Ṭabarī was buried on the morning after his death.

293. For instance, Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid was buried in a turbah in the harem of his house in Sūq al-'Aṭāsh. See above, n. 121.

deed noisy picketing of his home by Ḥanbalites which posed a threat of violence, it would have been taken care of expeditiously, and "tens of thousands soldiers" (used figuratively for enormously many) would hardly have been required. It is virtually unthinkable that someone of Ṭabarī's prominence and social standing would have been left without a well-attended funeral, unless he himself wanted it that way, and that anyone could have stopped such a funeral from taking place. Half a century earlier, something seemingly similar had happened, possibly also as the result of Ḥanbalite machinations. The great mystical writer al-Muḥāsibī was prevented from teaching, and, when he died, only four persons dared to attend his funeral.²⁹⁴ There is no proof that the events supposedly surrounding Ṭabarī's death and funeral were merely a calque on what was believed to have happened earlier to al-Muḥāsibī. At any rate, the latter was not as important a public figure as was Ṭabarī, whose death reverberated through all the leading and influential circles in Baghdad. It is more likely that if there were not very many people present when he was buried, it was because he himself had expressed the wish that it should be that way. The role of Ḥanbalite hostility, though real, seems to have been exaggerated in connection with his death as it was in his life.

His Death

Death came to Ṭabarī on Monday, Shawwāl 27, 310/February 17, 923.²⁹⁵ He was buried in his house the following morning. People prayed at his grave night and day for some time after his

294. See van Ess, *Gedankenwelt*, 10 f.

295. The complete dates found in *TB*, II, 166, were the only ones known to later biographers. The slight divergences between them can be interpreted in favor of the Monday date accepted here. Ibn Kāmil, who was present when Ṭabarī died, has Sunday evening, at two nights remaining of the month of Shawwāl. Converting the date to Shawwāl 27, this would be Monday, February 17. Another of Ṭabarī's students, who presumably was also there at the time, was ʿIsā b. Ḥāmid b. Bishr al-qāḍī (d. 368/979; see *TB*, XI, 178 f.). He has Saturday evening, at four nights remaining. This would be Shawwāl 25, corresponding to Saturday, February 15. Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 284 f., understands this date to refer to Shawwāl 26, which, however, would correspond to Sunday, February 16. The decisive factor in favor of the Monday date is the incidental reference by al-Farghānī to the fact that Ṭabarī died on a Monday. See below, n. 300.

death.²⁹⁶ As was customary, many eulogies were composed. One by the famous philologist Ibn Durayd, with whom Ṭabarī was acquainted,²⁹⁷ is preserved in its entirety. A few verses are quoted of the eulogy of Abū Saʿīd b. al-Aʿrābī, apparently the mystic Abū Saʿīd Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Ziyād.²⁹⁸

Legends, as they were commonly invented to glorify the last moments of life of great men, were also reported about Ṭabarī. He was told in his dying hours about a particular prayer unknown to him. He called for ink and paper to record it. Asked why he did that in his hopeless condition, he replied: "Everybody should use any opportunity to acquire new knowledge until he is dead."²⁹⁹ On the Monday on which he died, al-Farghānī reports, he asked for water to make the ablution for the noon prayer. When it was suggested to him that, weak as he was, he should combine the noon prayer with the afternoon prayer, he refused.³⁰⁰

He had a last word for his assembled students and friends, among them Ibn Kāmil, who asked for advice that would be beneficial for them to achieve salvation. His answer was worthy of the single-minded scholar he had been all his life: "My advice for you is to follow my religious practice and to act in accordance with what I have explained in my books—or something like it," the reporter rather lamely adds. "Then he repeated the confession of faith and mentioned God many times. He wiped his face with his hand and used it to close his eyes. When he let go, his spirit had left his body."³⁰¹

296. This fact is always stressed, apparently on the authority of Ibn Kāmil. See *TB*, II, 166, l. 19.

297. On Ibn Durayd [223–321/838–933], see *El²* III, 757 f., s. v. He reported Ṭabarī's remark on Abū Ḥatīm al-Sijistānī, see above, n. 160.

298. See *TB*, II, 166–9; Ibn 'Asākir, XCI–XCVI, and the other biographers for his and Ibn Durayd's eulogies. For Ibn al-Aʿrābī [246–341/860–953], see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 660 f. The addition of "Abū Saʿīd" in Ibn 'Asākir and Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 282, makes the identification virtually certain. It would seem unexpected to find a writer on mystical topics among the mourners of Ṭabarī [see above, n. 227]. Moreover, as far as we know, Ibn al-Aʿrābī had no ties to Baghdad. Ibn 'Asākir, XCII, further quotes verses by a certain Muḥammad b. al-Rūmī, apparently a *mawlā* of the Ṭāhirid family.

299. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIV. The transmission of the report involved al-Muʾāfā and a member of the Ibn al-Furāt family.

300. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVIII f. Al-Farghānī had the information from Abū Bakr (b. Sahl) al-Dīnawarī.

301. See Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXIX, continuing the preceding report. For another

There were always dreams conveying messages from the other world. Ṭabarī, too, had his message for a dreamer. Everything that had happened to him, and which others would have to face when they died, was really and truly good, he insisted. The dreamer then asked him whether he had been welcomed by God and would be willing to remember him to God. Ṭabarī took his wrist into his hand and pressed it to his breast, exclaiming: "You ask *me* to remember you to God, when we are taking you to the Messenger of God to give you his support?"³⁰² The Prophet, he meant to say, was more effective than he could be, and entry to the Prophet was assured to someone like him who had devoted more than seventy years to Islam with his immortal labors as a jurist and expert in traditions, Qur'ān interpreter, and historian.

His Works

The major works of Ṭabarī were first "dictated" in lectures. He worked on them at various times throughout his life. Their subject matter allowed for separate treatment of parts dealing with self-contained subjects. There is a considerable difference between the dates of final publication and the earlier dates when substantial portions of a given work got into circulation. This is the main reason why what seem to be the same works are referred to under different titles and what seem to be different titles are really books forming part of the final publication of one and the same work.

Ṭabarī's method of citing his own works is not uniform and raises at times some doubt as to whether the same work is meant. He prefers reference to subject matter. Formal titles were usually disregarded by him, if, in fact, they ever existed. Some works are described as having been incomplete at the time of his death. In his eighties, he had many incompleting large-scale projects; he must have worked on them for a long time and presumably used them in his lecturing. Their titles were naturally never fixed.

Another complicating factor affecting earlier bibliographers as

deathbed story involving Ibn Kāmil, see above, n. 237.

302. See Ibn 'Asākir, XCVI. The dreamer was a Hāshimite, al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-'Aziz. He was in charge of public prayers (*ṣāhib al-ṣalāh*) at the mosque of al-Ruṣāfah, and he died seventy-five years old in 333/945. See *TB*, VI, 339.

well as us is the loss of the lists of Ṭabarī's works in their original forms. Those who preserved extracts from the bibliographies also had no longer any knowledge of many of the works listed. They also could not check the fate of supposedly unfinished books.

We have a certain amount of external and internal evidence for the order of his works as to the time of composition or publication. Our information is, however, incomplete. Thus, it is not advisable to arrange the following bibliography chronologically. The safe procedure chosen here is to follow an alphabetical arrangement according to the first words of known or presumptive titles and to provide ample cross-references.

Listings in square brackets are to titles which appear to be parts of other works, or to works wrongly attributed to Ṭabarī. The alphabetization disregards *kitāb*, *risālah*, and the preposition *fī*. For an attempt to present the works according to chronological order and to subject matter, see Appendix B, below, pp. 152–54.

[*Al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīсах* and slightly different forms: See *Ādāb al-nufūs*]

[*Ādāb al-ḥukkām* "The proper ways of procedure for judges": See *Basīt*]

Ādāb al-manāsik "The proper ways of performing the ritual of the pilgrimage"

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI f.³⁰³:

Kitāb Ādāb al-manāsik. The work deals with what a pilgrim needs from the day he leaves (for the pilgrimage) and what he should choose to take care of³⁰⁴ for the beginning of his journey, what he should say and what prayers he should say upon mounting and descending, and the noteworthy sacred places (*al-manāzil wa-al-mashāhid*) he should see, and so on, during his entire pilgrimage.

Irshād VI, 453, l. 1, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, l. 3, mentions only

303. Ibn 'Asākir seems to have been quoted by Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*.

304. This translates *al-itmām*, but the reading is dubious. De Goeje's correction to *al-ayyām* "the days he should select" may be preferable.

the title which he states to be *Mukhtaṣar manāsik al-ḥajj*. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, l. 4, shortens Ibn 'Asākir's title to *Kitāb al-Manāsik*.³⁰⁵

Ādāb al-nufūs "The proper ways of spiritual behavior"

The work is quoted under the title of *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-ḥamīdah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīṣah* by al-Tanūkhī (see above, n. 197) and *Kitāb al-Ādāb al-nafīṣah wa-al-akhlāq al-ḥamīdah* by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 277, ll. 12 f. There are other variants, but there can be no doubt as to their referring to *Ādāb al-nufūs*. The use of the title in quotations may indicate that manuscripts bearing it were in circulation. The former title also appears in Ḥājī Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, I, 42, from which it was derived by d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 52b.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI:

He started on the *Ādāb al-nufūs*. It is another of his precious works. He structured in it man's religious duties according to all parts of the human body beginning with the heart, the tongue, the eyes, the ears, and so on. It includes the traditions on the subject from the Prophet, the Companions, the Followers, and all those who can be used as evidence. In the work, he also mentions and refers to as evidence the discussions of Sūfīs and pious men, including their reported deeds and all that is clearly correct there. He did not complete the work.

Irshād, VI, 449, l. 18–450, l. 14, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 76, l. 14–77, l. 15:

One of his fine works is the one entitled *Adab*³⁰⁶ *al-nufūs al-jayyidah wa-al-akhlāq al-nafīṣah*, often called by him *Adab al-naṣ al-sharīfah wa-al-akhlāq al-ḥamīdah*. In its introduction (*tarjamah*), he went into great detail with respect to the religious sciences, excellence, asceticism, sincere de-

305. A passage in Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, V, 352, l. 1, cites Ṭabarī as reporting *fi al-manāsik* a tradition from Mujāhid's Qur'ān commentary. It may refer to this work, but the subject matter dealt with has no explicit connection to the pilgrimage and the reference could be to any of Ṭabarī's legal works.

306. The singular *adab* is used in the passage, instead of the usual plural *ādāb*.

votion, gratitude, and the discussion of hypocrisy, haughtiness, submissiveness, humility, and patience³⁰⁷ as well as the command to do good and the prohibition to do evil. He began with a discussion of Satanic inspiration (*waswasah*) and psychologically motivated human actions (*a'māl al-qulūb*). Then he mentioned a good deal about prayer (*du'ā'*), the excellence of the Qur'ān, and the moments and indications as to when prayer is heard. He included the traditions on the subject transmitted from the Prophet's practice (*sunan*) and the statements of the Companions and the Followers. He discontinued lecturing (on the work, *imlā'*) at some point in the discussion of the command to do good and the prohibition to do evil. About five hundred folios were made public by him.

He had done four parts which had not yet been made public in lectures. (Those four parts) were in the hands of the copyist/bookseller (*al-warrāq*) Abū Sa'īd 'Umar b. Aḥmad al-Dīnawari³⁰⁸ when (the latter) left for Syria with them. He was waylaid on the road. Only two parts remained in his possession. They contained the discussion of man's duties to God in connection with his senses of seeing and hearing. He had begun (those four parts) in 310/922. He died a short while after having discontinued lecturing. He used to say: "If this book is made public, it will be a beauty." For after the discussion of man's rights and duties, he wanted to continue it to (indicating) the protection thereby offered against the dangers of the Day of Resurrection and the conditions governing it and the circumstances and happenings in the other world and mention Paradise and the Fire.

Irshād, VI, 437, ll. 16–18, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 60, ll. 4–6, and similarly VI, 456, ll. 14 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 86, ll. 5–7, refers to *Ādāb al-nufūs* as indicative of Ṭabarī's asceticism, abstinence, humility, integrity, purity of action, sincerity of intent, and propriety in whatever he died.

The title *Ādāb al-nufūs* appears again in Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 4, with no further information.

Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274, ll. 2 f., was confused by Ibn

307. It may be noted that all these topics were treated in Ṣūfī handbooks.

308. See above, n. 202.

'Asākīr's text, on which he drew, and considered *Tartīb al-'ulamā'* mentioned immediately before as an independent work, while it is presumably a part of *Basīṭ*. This results in his stating that "the *Tartīb al-'ulamā'* is one of his precious works. He started out in it with the *Ādāb al-nufūs* and *Ṣūfī* statements. He did not complete the work."

For al-Tanūkhī's quotation from the work, see above, n. 197. The passage preserved in Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, 277, was quoted as an example of Ṭabarī's stylistic elegance. It reflects the pietistic tone of the work. It consists of a chapter heading and the beginning words of the chapter, apparently taken from the work's opening pages:

The explanation of [the state] which makes it necessary³⁰⁹
for a human being to check his state with respect
to his psychologically motivated activity
for God

There is no state of the believer where his enemy (Satan) who is in charge of him does not try to entice him to his own way and to lie in wait for him, so as to block his (progress along) the straight roads of his Lord. Thus Satan said to his Lord, as he was made by Him one of those hoping for "postponement": "I shall lie (in wait) for them along Your straight path. Then I shall approach them from in front and from behind."³¹⁰ He was hoping to make his hostile expectation come true, as expressed in what he said to his Lord: "If You grant me postponement to the Day of Resurrection, I shall indeed take over control of (Adam's) progeny with few exceptions."³¹¹ It is therefore every intelligent person's duty to train himself strenuously to make (Satan's) expectations not come true, to frustrate his hope, and to make every effort to humiliate him. Nothing in human activity is more detested by Satan than man's obedience to his Lord and disobedience to his own (Satan's) command, and nothing gives him greater joy than (man's) disobedience to his Lord and his

309. Read *yūjibu* for *yajibu*.

310. Qur. 7:14-17.

311. Qur. 17:62.

following his own (Satan's) command.

[*Ādāb al-quḍāh* or *Adab al-qāḍī* "The proper ways of procedure for judges": See *Basīṭ*]

Al-Ādar (?) *fī al-uṣūl* "? on the principles"

Irshād, VI, 453, l. 4, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81, ll. 6 f.:

He promised the *Kitāb al-'-d-r fī al-uṣūl* but made nothing of it public.

The "principles" are presumably those of jurisprudence, here to be treated in monograph form. Neither editor of *Irshād* indicates what '*-l-'-d-r*' could possibly mean. Assuming some slight corruption in the text, *fī al-uṣūl* may not be part of a title, and something totally different may be concealed under the reading '*-l-'-d-r*'.

[*Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām* "The laws of the Muslim religion"]

This was the working title for a comprehensive exposition of the sharī'ah that Ṭabarī had apparently planned but never executed as intended. See *Tafsīr*, I, 37 (translated below, 113), and II, 352, l. 16 (*ad* Qur. 2:238).]

[*Fī ahl al-baghy* "On wrongdoers (rebels)": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Risālat al-Akhlāq* "On moral behavior": See *Mūjaz*]

[*Amthilat al-'udūl* "Forms for attorneys"]

This is said to be the title of a book on document forms (*shurūṭ*), a part of *Laṭīf*.]

[*al-'Aqīdah* "(Ṭabarī's) Creed": See *Ṣarīḥ*]

Listed as a separate title in Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 8, the "Creed" is identical with *Ṣarīḥ*. A quotation from it in Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 280, and 'Uluww, 150, corresponds to *Ṣarīḥ*, text,

198, trans., 192.]

[*Al-Aṭ'imah* "Dietary laws": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Baṣīr fī ma'ālim al-dīn*: See *Tabṣīr*]

Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "A plain and simple exposition of the laws of the Muslim religion"

This title was used by Ṭabarī in *History*, I, 1455. He says there with reference to divergent statements as to how the Prophet performed the "prayer of fear" upon meeting with potential enemies during the raid of Dhāt al-riqā': "God willing, I shall mention the different statements in our book entitled *Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām* in the book on the prayer of fear."³¹²

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, ll. 22–24:

Kitāb al-Basīṭ fī al-fiqh. He did not complete it. The following books of it have been made public: The large book on document forms (*shurūṭ*), records and documents (*al-mahāḍir wa-al-sijillāt*), last wills (*al-waṣāyā*), the procedure for judges (*adab al-qāḍī*), ritual purity, prayer, and charity taxes.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXI:

He started on his book *al-Basīṭ*. He made public its book on ritual purity in something like 1,500 folios. (The size was that large) because in each chapter, he mentioned the disagreements of the Companions, the Followers, and others according to their ways of transmission (that is, the various recensions in which their statements were transmitted). He also mentioned their reasons for the views chosen by them

^{312.} *History*, I, 1453 ff., places the raid of Dhāt al-riqā' in the year 4/626. The circumstances were very much debated, and no agreement appears to have been achieved about the date of the raid and about the prayer of fear (*ṣalāt al-khawf*) connected with it. See the long exposition in Ibn Hajar, *Fath*, VIII, 420–33. See also, for instance, Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, ed. Wüstenfeld, 661 ff., trans. Guillaume, 445–57. Ibn Hajar, 426 f., refers to the passage in *History*, I, 1455, in a rather unclear manner; his reference to *Tafsīr* may refer to *Tafsīr*, VI, 94 (*ad Qur.* 5:11).

as their *madhhab* and added his own preference and the arguments for it at the end of each chapter. He made public most of the *Basīṭ*'s book on prayer and the entire *Ādāb al-ḥukkām*,³¹³ as well as the book on records and documents and the classification of scholars (*Tartīb al-'ulamā'*).³¹⁴

Irshād, VI, 448, l. 18–449, l. 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 75, l. 7–76, l. 13:

One of his excellent works is the one entitled *Basīṭ al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. He prefaced it with an interesting book entitled *Marātib al-'ulamā'*.³¹⁵ He included in it the invocation (*khuṭbah*) of the work and urged the reader to acquire religious and legal knowledge. He strongly criticized those of his colleagues³¹⁶ who restricted themselves to transmitting it without using its contents in their juridical activities. Then he mentioned the scholars among the Companions of the Messenger of God who held legal views like himself (*tafaqqaha 'alā madhhabihi*),³¹⁷ and the jurists of the major centers of the following four (generations) who successively transmitted that material. He started with Medina as the place to which the Prophet emigrated as well as his successors Abū Bakr, 'Umar, and 'Uthmān, and those after them.³¹⁸ (He continued with) Mecca, the Noble Sanctuary, followed by the two Iraqs al-Kufāh and al-Baṣrah, and then Syria and Khurāsān. After discussing ritual purity, he worked on the book on prayer. In this work (that is, the entire *Basīṭ*), he mentioned the disagreements and agreements among scholars exhaustively with clear explanations of (the views expressed by them) and the indication of who held a particular view, and then he stated what was correct [in his

313. The correct reading *al-ḥukkām*, as against the text's *al-aḥkām*, is attested by Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, and Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*. The work is identical with *Adab al-qāḍī/Ādāb al-quḍāh*.

314. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 21–274, l. 2, has an abridged version, as does Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 122. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 4, merely has *Basīṭ al-qawl*.

315. *Tartīb al-'ulamā'*.

316. The pronominal suffix refers to his own colleagues and students (see also n. 317). His criticism was no doubt held in general terms without naming names.

317. The pronominal suffix does not refer to the Prophet but to his own legal school.

318. Note that 'Alī is not mentioned.

opinion in each case).³¹⁹ He made public about two thousand folios.

He (also) published the *Basīṭ's Kitāb Ādāb al-quḍāh*, an outstanding accomplishment that is highly esteemed among his (publications, *al-ma'dūdah laḥū*) because, after the invocation (*khuṭbah*), he mentioned in it the praiseworthy character of judges and their secretaries. (He discussed) how judges must act after being appointed, what they must accept and what they must look at critically and then reverse earlier legal judgments. (He also included) a discussion of records (*siḡillāt*), legal testimony (by experts, *shahādāt*), claims (of litigants, *da'āwī*), and evidence (*bayyināt*).³²⁰ It was to include a discussion of all the legal knowledge needed by judges (*al-ḥākim*), until he would finally be through with it. It is one thousand folios.

Ṭabarī used to recommend to his colleagues and students to devote serious study to *Basīṭ* and *Tahdhīb* in preference to any other of his works.

[*Al-Bayān fī uṣūl al-aḥkām* "A clear exposition of the legal principles": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Dalālah 'alā nubuwwat (Rasūl Allāh)* "Evidence for the Prophethood of the Messenger of God"]

Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl., I, 218, lists this title with reference to *History*, I, 1146:

Abū Ja'farsays: Reports on the Prophethood (of Muḥammad) are innumerable. Therefore, if God wills, a monograph should by devoted to them.

Such a monograph may actually have been written by Ṭabarī and become part of one of his other publications, or he may have intended to write one and never did, but *al-Dalālah*... was cer-

319. See above, n. 216.

320. These are the ordinary elements of court proceedings. If the rest of the paragraph is correctly translated, it means that the entire work was to include much more legal material of interest to jurists and judges, but only a thousand folios were so far available of the chapter on judges.

tainly never meant to be an actual title and was merely a description of the contents.]

Dhayl al-Mudhayyal "The Appendix (with historical information on religious scholars, needed in connection with *History*)"

The public presentation of *Dhayl* started after 300/912-3; see below.

The skimpy selection (*muntakhab*) from the work that is preserved and was published with *History*, III, 2295-2561, ed. Cairo, XI, 492-705, repeatedly refers to "*al-Mudhayyal*" as if this were another work (and *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal* a supplement to it), but presumably, the complete text of the work, now lost, entitled *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*, was meant.³²¹

Al-Farghānī's *Ijāzah* refers to "*Kitāb Ta'rikh al-rijāl* 'History of personalities (= religious scholars)', entitled *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal*."³²² In fact, the work is often listed as *Ta'rikh al-rijāl*; see Ibn 'Asākir (below); Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 8-10; Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 285, ll. 20 f.; Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 9.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX:

Also complete is *Ta'rikh al-rijāl*, dealing with the Companions, the Followers, and their successors down to his own authorities from whom he wrote down (*kataba*) information.

Irshād, VI, 445, ll. 6-17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 70, l. 9-71, l. 3:

His book entitled *Kitāb Dhayl al-mudhayyal*. It includes the history (dates, *ta'rikh*) of the Companions of the Messenger of God who were killed or died during his life or after his death, in order of their relative closeness to him and to the Quraysh with respect to tribal affiliation. He then mentioned (the dates of) death of the Followers and the ancient Muslims after them, then their successors and down to his own teachers with whom he studied (*sami'a*). He in-

321. For the references, see *Dhayl*, III, 2321, 2335, 2358, 2476, ed. Cairo, XI, 512, 523, 540, 628.

322. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 44, l. 18.

cluded a number (*jumalan*) of their traditions and opinions (*akhbārihim wa-madhāhibihim*), speaking up in defense of the outstanding scholars among them who were accused of holding opinions they did not, as, for instance, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Qatādah, Ṭkrimah,³²³ and others. (On the other hand,) he also mentioned the weakness³²⁴ and softness of transmitters who were considered weak and soft. At the end, the work contains fine chapters on those whose brothers transmitted traditions from them, fathers and sons (who transmitted from one another), and those who were not known by their names but by their patronymics, and vice versa. It is a truly excellent work which *ḥadīth* students and historians are eager to have. He made it public in lectures after the year 300/912-3. It is about one thousand folios.

In another context, *Irshād*, VI, 454, l. 15, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 83, l. 10, adds that the beginning of *Dhayl* dealt with objectionable sectarian views, presumably, if the statement is correct, those falsely ascribed to early Muslims (?). In its lecture form, the work contained high praise for Abū Ḥanīfah; see above, n. 237.

Al-Faḍā'il "The virtues (and remarkable accomplishments and statements of certain ancient Muslims)"

Ṭabarī worked at different times on a project to collect comprehensive information on the "virtues" of the first four caliphs³²⁵ as well as al-'Abbās, the ancestor of the ruling 'Abbāsids. The formal titles of these works, if there were any, are in doubt.

The *Faḍā'il Abī Bakr wa-'Umar* are listed as an unfinished work in *Irshād*, VI, 452, l. 18, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 80 f. According to *Irshād*, VI, 455 f., ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 85, ll. 5 f., Ṭabarī wrote his work in response to extremist Shī'ah slander of the Prophet's Companions and began with Abū Bakr and 'Umar. The *Faḍā'il al-'Abbās* are

323. For these ancient Muslims, see below, translation, nn. 642, 64, and 161. The preserved excerpt of *Dhayl* appears to contain the accusations leveled against Ṭkrimah, see III, 2483-85, ed. Cairo, XI, 633-5.

324. *Irshād*, ed. Rifāʿī, has a meaningless *ṣirf* for *da'f*.

325. 'Uthmān is only mentioned in Ibn 'Asākir in a rather perfunctory fashion. It is impossible to be sure, but he may have been intentionally excluded from the *Faḍā'il* series, despite Ṭabarī's ordinary view of the first four caliphs.

listed in the immediately following lines. In the second passage, *Irshād* adds: "He began with a fine invocation (*khutbah*) and lectured on some of it. He discontinued all lecturing before his death, because he considered it too bothersome a task." It is not entirely clear whether this refers to the *Faḍā'il* of Abū Bakr and 'Umar or those of al-'Abbās, or both. Most likely it refers to all of Ṭabarī's lecturing activity.

The *Faḍā'il 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, which also remained incomplete, constitute a special case, as intimated in the sources.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII, used by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 274, ll. 6-9:

When Ṭabarī learned that Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī³²⁶ spoke critically about the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm,³²⁷ he composed the *Kitāb al-Faḍā'il*. He started with the virtues of Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, and 'Alī and critically discussed and argued in favor of the soundness of the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm. His work came to an end with what he mentioned of the virtues of the Commander of the Faithful 'Alī.

Irshād, VI, 452, ll. 16 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 80, ll. 15-17, briefly states that "in the beginning of the *Kitāb Faḍā'il 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib*, he critically (and favorably) discussed the soundness of the traditions (*akhbār*) on Ghadīr Khumm and had this discussion followed by the virtues [of 'Alī]. He did not finish the work."

Ibn Kāmil's report as reproduced in *Irshād*, VI, 455, l. 11-456, l. 1, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 84, l. 13-85, l. 7, is more detailed:

One of the scholars in Baghdad³²⁸ had declared the Ghadīr Khumm (episode) to be untrue because, he said, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was in the Yemen at the time when the Messenger of God was at Ghadīr Khumm. In a *muzdawwij* poem contain-

326. See above, n. 229.

327. On the celebrated and controversial designation by Muḥammad of 'Alī as his putative successor at the Pool of Khumm, see *EI*², II, 993 f., s. v. Ghadīr Khumm.

328. His identity as indicated in Ibn 'Asākir is no doubt correct. It would be interesting to know whether the omission of the name was due to Ibn Kāmil and, if so, why he might have omitted it.

ing descriptions of each place and station (in Arabia, connected with the Prophet's biography [?]), that man inserted the following lines alluding to the significance of the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm:

Then we passed by Ghadīr Khumm,
Subject to a large number of fraudulent statements
About 'Alī and the illiterate Prophet (*al-umm[i]*).

When Abū Ja'far learned about it, he started on a discussion of the virtues of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and mentioned the various recensions of the tradition of Khumm. Many people flocked to listen to (his lectures on) the subject.

Some extremist Shī'ites, who unseemingly slandered the Companions, came together. So Ṭabarī started (to write) on the virtues of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. Then the 'Abbāsids asked him about the *faḍā'il* of al-'Abbās. He began.... (see above)."

In view of the importance of the subject for Shī'ah history, notice was occasionally taken of Ṭabarī's work among Shī'ites. The Shī'ah bibliographer al-Ṭūsī commented on it as follows:

The historian Ṭabarī, not (his) Shī'ah (namesake), composed a *Kitāb Ghadīr Khumm*, commenting on the subject. We were informed about it by Aḥmad b. 'Abdūn—Abū Bakr al-Dūrī—Ibn Kāmil—Ṭabarī.³²⁹

Later sunnī discomfort with Ṭabarī's effort was expressed by the fourteenth-century Ibn Kathīr.

(Ṭabarī) concerned himself with the tradition of Ghadīr Khumm and composed two volumes³³⁰ on the subject. In those volumes, he reported the various recensions as they were transmitted and by whom. His discussion is a mixed bag of valuable and worthless, sound and unsound information. This is in keeping with the custom of many *ḥadīth*

329. See Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, 178. The only individual in the *isnād* not commonly connected with Ṭabarī is Aḥmad b. 'Abdūn. He is said to have been known as Ibn Ḥāshir; see the editor's introduction of Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, II.

330. See Kern's introduction of his edition of *Ikhṭilāf*, 12, where the manuscript said to contain the history of al-Birzālī is quoted as referring to two substantial volumes.

scholars who (merely) report the information they have on a subject and make no distinction between what is sound and what is weak.³³¹

The tentative conclusion which we may draw from all these statements would seem to be as follows: Ṭabarī occasionally lectured on the "virtues" (as he did on the traditions; see *Tahdhīb*) of some of the famous Companions. When an attack on the reliability of the report on the famous Shī'ah episode of Ghadīr Khumm was published, he felt impelled to discuss the subject and could not avoid continuing with a substantial account of 'Alī's "virtues." The caliphal court then naturally suggested that equal time be given to their side and the virtues of al-'Abbās be properly extolled. Much politics of some sort or other was clearly involved in Ṭabarī's dealing with all those matters important alike to the Shī'ah, the sunnī orthodoxy, and the government authorities. While Ṭabarī's personal identification with "orthodox" attitudes cannot be doubted, he appears to have tried to be even-handed in an objective scholarly manner, much to the embarrassment of later sunnī authors. He may have thought of putting all his lectures together in one major work on the "virtues" of the leading early Muslims. If he did, he did not live long enough to execute the project. Individual installments circulated for a while. It apparently did not take very long for them to become generally unavailable. Religio-political rancor and rivalry no doubt again played a role in their gradual disappearance.

[*Kitāb al-Fatwā* "On legal decisions": See below, n. 343]

Al-Faṣl bayn al-qirā'ah "The (schools of) variant readings of the Qur'ān presented in separate detail"

This seems to be an approximately correct rendering of the rather strange title. In this form, it occurs only in *Irshād*. It appears to have figured in Ibn Kāmil's bibliography. Everywhere else,

331. See Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, V, 208. Ibn Kathīr continues with a reference to Ibn 'Asākir who, he says, also reported many recensions of the Prophet's speech at Ghadīr Khumm. The entire statement may go back to an older source, perhaps Ibn 'Asākir. It is rather unlikely that Ibn Kathīr would have known Ṭabarī's work.

the work is simply described as dealing with the variant readings of the Qur'ān (*Kitāb fī al-qirā'āt*).

For a manuscript of the work preserved in al-Azhar, which has not yet been published, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 9, and Gilliot, "Les sept lectures."

Al-Jāmi' is also mentioned as a title. Quoting al-Dānī, Ibn al-Jazarī states that Ṭabarī's "fine work on *qirā'āt*" was entitled *al-Jāmi'*.³³² Maqrīzī, *Muqaffā*, who also relied on al-Dānī, does not mention the title. It may derive from a confusion with *Jāmi' al-bayān*, the title of *Tafsīr* which, of course, was concerned with variant readings. In fact, Hājji Khalīfah, ed. Yaltkaya, 1319a, lists Ṭabarī's *Jāmi' al-bayān* (!) among works on *qirā'āt*, although elsewhere (see n. 332), he has *al-Jāmi' on qirā'ah*. From the sources available to him, Pretzl also concluded that *al-Jāmi'* was not a different work.³³³ It is, however, not entirely impossible, if unlikely, that a monograph on variant readings entitled *al-Jāmi'*, as distinct from the work on *qirā'āt*, was produced by Ṭabarī, perhaps based on *Tafsīr*, or circulated under his name.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, has *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt* and lists no further title on Qur'ān readings.

Among Ṭabarī's completed works, Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX, mentions *Kitāb al-Qirā'āt wa-al-tanzīl wa-al-'adad*, apparently one and the same work. This means that it also dealt with subjects such as the dates of the revelation of various sūrah's and statistical data such as the number of their verses.³³⁴

Irshād, VI, 441, l. 17–443, l. 17, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 65, l. 13–68, l. 7, has much detail. Most of it derives from Ibn Kāmil. It is however, unclear what was found in his bibliography or went back to some other Ibn Kāmil tradition unconnected with the discus-

332. See Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāyah*, II, 107, ll. 5 f.; also idem, *Nashr*, I, 33: "a very substantial book containing over twenty (schools of) variants readings." The passage from *Nashr* was reproduced (directly or from a common source) by Hājji Khalīfah, ed. Yaltkaya, I, 576, under *al-Jāmi' fī al-qirā'āt al-'ashr*.

333. See Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, 208, n. 7. From their work, Brockelmann, *GAL*², I, 149, derived the title *Jāmi' al-qirā'āt min al-mashhūr wa-al-shawādh dh wa-'ilal dhālika wa-sharḥuhū*.

334. Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 285, ll. 5 f., states that Ṭabarī "wrote a work on *qirā'āt*" and lists it on 285, l. 20, as *al-Qirā'āt wa-al-'adad wa-al-tanzīl wa-ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*. He apparently understood *ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'* as referring to differences with respect to Qur'ān readings, and not as a reference to *Ikhtilāf*.

sion of the work on Qur'ān readings. An obvious intrusion is a quotation from al-Farghānī. The repeated reference to Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām also speaks for different sources. With the exception of the Farghānī passage, the following translation renders the entire text of *Irshād*, which is instructive in many important respects:

Kitāb al-Faṣl bayn al-qirā'ah. He mentioned in it the differences of the Qur'ān readers with respect to the variant readings (*ḥurūf*) of the Qur'ān. It is a very good work. He specified in it the names of the Qur'ān readers in Medina, Mecca, al-Kūfah, al-Baṣrah, Syria, and elsewhere. He gives separate details on each reading. He mentions it as is (*wajh*), its interpretation (*ta'wīl*),³³⁵ the views expressed on it by each reader, and his own preference for what is correct on the basis of clear proof for the soundness of his preferred reading. It clearly shows his ability to interpret (*tafsīr*) and establish the correct linguistic form (*i'rāb*), an ability which nobody would deny is unmatched by other Qur'ān readers, even though they were excellent scholars and enjoyed priority. He introduced the work with an appropriate invocation (*khuṭbah*). Such was his custom in his books. He started a given work with an invocation outlining its topic (*ma'nā*) and then constructed its contents in accordance with (the outline presented in) the invocation.³³⁶

Abū Ja'far was famous for his Qur'ān recitation. Qur'ān readers from afar and other people came to pray behind him in order to hear him read and recite the Qur'ān.³³⁷

When Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid, says Ibn Kāmil, mentioned Ṭabarī, he praised him highly: "Nothing like his book on the subject (of *qirā'āt*) has ever been written," and he said to us: "I have never heard anyone who was a better Qur'ān reader in the prayer niche (*miḥrāb*) than Abū Ja'far," or words to this effect.

335. In *Tafsīr*, Ṭabarī refers to Qur'ān interpreters commonly as *ahl al-ta'wīl*, and much less frequently as *ahl al-tafsīr*.

336. A good example is the *khuṭbah* "invocation/introduction" of *History*. See below, n. 445, and translation, n. 6.

337. The proximity to the mention of Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid (see above, n. 121) in the following paragraph makes it likely that this paragraph also goes back to him.

Ibn Kāmil continued: Abū Ja'far originally followed the Qur'ān reading of Ḥamzah,³³⁸ before he settled on his own reading.

(A more detailed description of the development of Ṭabarī's work in the field of Qur'ān reading is inserted here following al-Farghānī.)

Ibn Kāmil continued quoting Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid: After having highly praised his work on variant readings (*kitābahū fī al-qirā'āt*), (Ibn Mujāhid) said: But I have found an error in it. He mentioned it to me, and I was astonished, since Ṭabarī followed the reading and recitation of Ḥamzah. It was because Ṭabarī based his work upon that of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām.³³⁹ Abū 'Ubayd had neglected that particular variant reading, and Ṭabarī copied it that way.

Ibn Kāmil continued: Abū Ja'far told us the following: I heard about a Qur'ān reader in Sūq Yaḥyā.³⁴⁰ I went and read the Qur'ān to him from the beginning to Qur. 2:26: "God is not ashamed (*yastahyī*) to coin a simile." I repeatedly tried to make it clear to him that there were two *yā*'s (in *yastahyī*). He objected, and eventually I said: Do you want still more of an explanation for the two *yā*'s with an *i* vowel after the first?³⁴¹ He did not know what I was talking about. So I got up and never went back to him.

He continued: Ṭabarī had in his possession the recension of Warsh—Nāfi' as transmitted to him by Yūnus b. 'Abd al-

338. Ḥamzah, one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived during the first three-quarters of the second/eighth century. See *El*², III, 155, s. v. Ḥamzah b. Ḥabīb.

339. The remark is repeated at the end of the quotation. For the important author Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 166 f. (many of his works have meanwhile been published). Ṭabarī often cites him in *Tafsīr* as an indirect source ("I was told on the authority of . . ."). Ahmad b. Yūsuf al-Tha'labī (d. 273/886, see *TB*, V, 218 f.), mentioned below, appears repeatedly as the intermediate transmitter. His *nisbah* is also given, probably incorrectly, as Taghlibī.

340. The Yaḥyā Bazaar was located in al-Shammāsiyyah near the Tigris Bridge, according to Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 199 ff. and Map V (marked no. 45); Lassner, *Topography*, index.

341. The Egyptian edition of the Qur'ān spells *yastahyī* with one *yā*' and indicates that the following *i* vowel is to be read as a long *ī* (thus avoiding the implication that the alternate form *yastahī* may be meant). This appears to be the situation which Ṭabarī wished to explain to the man who proved to be inordinately obtuse.

A'lā from Warsh.³⁴² (Students) came to Ṭabarī on account of it. As I was told, Abū Bakr b. Mujāhid wanted to have private instruction in that recension from Ṭabarī. Although (Ibn Mujāhid) was a recognized scholar and esteemed by Ṭabarī, the latter refused. (He told him) that he would teach it only, if others were present together with him. This did not sit well with Abū Bakr (b. Mujāhid). Ṭabarī's reasons for the refusal was that he disliked to let anyone have any knowledge that he did not (equally) impart also to others. This was his moral stance. When a number of students studied a book with him, and one of them was unable to be present, he would not permit only some (of the students in class to continue) to study. And if someone wanted to study a book (with him) in absentia, he would not teach him the book until he presented himself in person. An exception was the book on legal decisions (*Kitāb al-Fatwā*).³⁴³

His work on variant readings comprises the work of Abū 'Ubayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām. It was in his possession as transmitted by Aḥmad b. Yūsuf al-Tha'labī on Abū 'Ubayd's authority. He based his own work on it.

Irshād, VI, 427, ll. 6–9, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 45, ll. 10–14, quotes from a work on Qur'ān reading entitled *al-Iqnā'* by Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī al-Ahwāzī [d. 446/1054[5]:

(Ṭabarī's work) on *qirā'āt*, a truly great work (or a massive, large work?). The copy I have seen was in eighteen volumes, albeit written in a large script. He mentioned in it all the readings, both those generally accepted (*mashhūr*) and those that are unusual, with the reasons for each reading and comments on it. He did not diverge from what was generally known with respect to any reading he preferred (as being acceptable to him).

342. For Uthman b. Sa'īd, nicknamed Warsh (110–97/728[9]–812[3]), see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 11; Ibn al-Jazari, *Ghāyah*, I, 502 f. Nāfi' b. ('Abd al-Rahmān b.) Abī Nu'aym, one of the seven Qur'ān readers, lived in and beyond the first half of the second/eighth century, see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 9 f. Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā has been mentioned above, n. 99, as one of Ṭabarī's authorities during his visit to Egypt.

343. No such title is mentioned among Ṭabarī's works. It could be part of one of his other legal works, or it may not be a specific work but a file of legal decisions kept by him, in case he was asked to render a decision on a problem.

[*Ghadīr Khumm*: See *Faḍā 'il*]

[*Ḥadīth al-himyān*: "The story of the Khurāsānian whose belt was lost in Mecca"]

In the biography of Ibn al-Maḥāmīlī (368-415/978[9]-1024), a Shāfi'ite jurist and an early teacher of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, this item is mentioned as a report (*khbar*) of Ṭabarī.³⁴⁴ It was, the Khaṭīb says, the only bit of information he was ever able to elicit from Ibn al-Maḥāmīlī. Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 49, merely quotes *TB* without adding anything to it. Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 10, refers to a manuscript of the treatise in Cairo. Through the good services of Dr. Elise Crosby, I am in the possession of a microfilm enlargement of the text (Ms. 1558 [ḥadīth], pp. 439-45, dating from the ninth/sixteenth century). It turns out not to be a work by Ṭabarī, but it presents itself as a reminiscence from Ṭabarī's younger years told by him to Abū Khāzim al-Mu'allā b. Sa'id al-Baghdādī al-Bazzār, who died about 353/964 (see *TB*, XIII, 190 f.). It was in Egypt in 346/964 that al-Mu'allā reported that he had heard Ṭabarī tell him the story in 300/912[3]. The gist of the story is as follows:

Ṭabarī was in Mecca in 240/855 (the pilgrimage in that year took place around the end of April). There he heard a Khurāsānian advertise the loss of a belt containing one thousand dīnārs. As we learn later, these thousand dīnārs were one-third of the amount of money his father had left him with the admonition that he give them to the most worthy person he might encounter on the pilgrimage. An old man, whose name was Abū Ghiyāth al-Ja'farī (being a client of Ja'far b. Muḥammad, apparently the sixth imām of the Shi'ah, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq), approached the Khurāsānian and suggested that a reward of ten percent be given to the finder if he came forward. When the Khurāsānian refused, he came down in the following two days to, at first, one percent and, then, a single dīnār. Ṭabarī suspected that the old man himself was the finder of the belt. He followed him to his house the first time, but he stayed at home the next day, as he was occupied with copying the famous work on Qurashite genealogy (*Kitāb al-Nasab*) by al-Zubayr b. Bakkār (d. 256/870).^{344a} Ṭabarī had been right. The old man had

344. See *TB*, IV, 372 f.; Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 10.

344a. I have no decisive information that Ṭabarī studied personally with al-

the belt. His wife asked him to keep it, but he did not want to bring disgrace upon himself in his old age, no matter how grinding the poverty in which he lived together with his household consisting of his wife, his mother-in-law, two sisters, and four daughters. Thus, on the third day, when the Khurāsānian again refused to offer a monetary reward, he took him to his house, with the two of them being followed by Ṭabarī. The Khurāsānian identified the belt and its contents as his and was about to leave with it when he remembered his father's deathbed admonition. He realized that the honest old man was, among all the people he had met on his journey, the one most deserving of the money. So he gave the money to him and left. Ṭabarī also wanted to leave but was called back by the old man, who then distributed the money coin by coin to his family of nine, including Ṭabarī as the tenth person to receive a share of a hundred dinārs. Ṭabarī lived on the money for a number of years and used it to defray all his study expenses. When he was in Mecca again after 256/870, he learned that the old man had died a few months after the episode with the belt. The four daughters and her husbands and offspring were still alive, but, as Ṭabarī was told, they were all gone in 290/903.

In the biography of al-Mu'allā, Dhahabī, *Mizān*, IV, 148, and Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, VI, 63 (both quoted in the margin of the Cairo manuscript), expressed themselves convinced that the story was invented by al-Mu'allā but gave no proof except claiming that al-Mu'allā was an untrustworthy transmitter. They may have a point. The story is of the type of the "four Muḥammads" (above, 29 f.) and even more unbelievable. The way in which Ṭabarī came into the possession of his share seems fanciful and hardly reflects credit on him. There are pro-Shi'ah overtones, which may point to Ḥanbalite propaganda directed against him. On the other hand, it might just be possible that the two visits to Mecca, the one in 240 when Ṭabarī was about sixteen, and the other after 256, during or after his stay in Egypt, have a basis in fact and supply us with an otherwise missing bit of biographical information. There is, of course, nothing unusual with a young student undertaking

Zubayr b. Bakkār. In *History*, he is mostly introduced as an indirect, possibly written, source. *Haddathanā*, in I, 1314 and 3072, may reflect a misuse of the term. On the other hand, Ṭabarī may very well have met al-Zubayr in Baghdad or in Mecca where, however, he became judge only in 242 (according to Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 317).

the pilgrimage, perhaps in the company of fellow students and teachers.

According to the sources, the story came into circulation during the fourth/tenth century. Beyond al-Mu'allā, the chain of transmitters, as indicated in the manuscript, is flawless: Ṭabarī—al-Mu'allā—Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn Shādhān al-Bazzār (298-383/910-93, see *TB*, IV, 18-20)—Aḥmad b. 'Alī (Ibn) al-Bādā (d. 420/1029, see *TB*, IV, 322; he taught the story in Rabi' II, 417/May-June 1026. Al-Bādā, of uncertain origin, looks rather like al-Bārā in the manuscript)—Abū Muḥammad Rizqallāh b. 'Abd al-Wahhāb al-Tamīmī *al-wā'iz* (d., eighty-eight years old, in 488/1095, see Dhahabī, *Ibar*, III, 320 f.)—Abū al-Faḍl Muḥammad b. Nāṣir b. Muḥammad (467-550/1074[5]-1155, see Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 524, n. 2; Eche, *Les Bibliothèques arabes*, 180 f.), who received permission to transmit the story from Rizqallāh but also copied it from a manuscript by a certain Abū al-Ḥasan al-...^{344b}—Ibn al-Jawzī, the famous Ḥanbalite scholar and historian (510-97/1116[7]-1201)—Abū al-Faraj 'Abd al-Latif b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Ḥarrānī (587-672/1191-1273, see Ibn al-'Imād, *Shadharāt*, V, 336)—Ṣadr al-dīn Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Maydūmī (664-754/1266-1353, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Durar*, IV, 157 f.)—Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (745-836/1344[5]-1433, see Sakhāwī, *Daw'*, II, 106 f.). Some of the individuals mentioned were very young when they received permission to transmit the story. This agrees with its edifying moral character which was thought particularly suitable for young children.]

'Ibārat al-ru'yā "On dream interpretation"

Irshād, VI, 452 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81, ll. 2 f., states that Ṭabarī worked on "a book on dream interpretation containing traditions

^{344b}. The manuscript has al-...ādhānī, which I have so far been unable to identify. There was an Abū al-Ḥasan al-Baradānī who died in 469/1077 (and was possibly born in 388/998, if 308 in the *Muntaẓam* is to be corrected to 388). See Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, II, 144, and Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VIII, 311. However, the correction of Barādhānī to Baradānī is not self-evident, and the first two consonants can be read in a large variety of ways.

(on the subject) but died before he could produce it." It was another of those projects on which Ṭabarī was still working at the time of his death. As indicated, it was a work on *ḥadīth*.

Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The disagreements of the scholars in the major centers with respect to the laws of the Muslim religion"

This is the full title of the celebrated work, which is partly preserved (see below). It is often referred to in an abridged form, such as *Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār*,³⁴⁵ *Ikhtilāf al-'ulamā'*,³⁴⁶ or simply *al-Ikhtilāf*. The title *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'* is found, notably in Ibn al-Nadīm but also elsewhere.³⁴⁷ It is the title used in the printed editions of the preserved parts of the work. See also Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf*," 65.

A report in *Irshād* (see below, 85) apparently is of Ḥanbalite inspiration. It speaks of the publication of the work after Ṭabarī's death, if this is what the rather strange report really means. Probably, the reference to *Ikhtilāf* figured in it only by some sort of obfuscation. *Ikhtilāf* was also considered Ṭabarī's first literary production. In view of the fact that *Laṭīf* is cited in it and was considered by Ṭabarī in the choice of its contents,³⁴⁸ this may also seem a strange statement. It is well possible, however, that parts of *Ikhtilāf* came out before the publication of any part of *Laṭīf* and that quotations from *Laṭīf* occurred only in later parts of *Ikhtilāf* or were subsequently added by Ṭabarī in those earlier parts already published. No absolute publication dates are mentioned in the sources.

As in the case of *Laṭīf*, Ṭabarī also wrote, or started on, an introductory *risālah* to *Ikhtilāf* dealing with the basic principles (see below, n. 356).

Irshād, VI, 445, l. 17–447, l. 18, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 71, l. 4–73, l. 5, presents a full discussion of the history of the work:

345. See al-Farghānī, *Ijāzah*, in *Irshād*, VI, 427, l. 2, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 45, ll. 4 f.; Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX, Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 12; Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 2.

346. See 'Abbādī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 52.

347. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 5; *Irshād* (see below); Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Itḥāf* (see below, n. 361).

348. See below, 116.

His work famed for excellence in East and West entitled *Kitāb Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. His intention was to mention in it the statements of the following jurists: (1) Mālik b. Anas, the leading Medinese jurist, according to two recensions, (2) 'Abd al-Rahmān b. 'Amr al-Awzā'i, the leading Syrian jurist, (3) the Kūfan Sufyān al-Thawrī, according to two recensions, (4) Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'i, according to the transmission of al-Rabī b. Sulaymān³⁴⁹ on al-Shāfi'i's authority, the Kūfans (5) Abū Ḥanīfah al-Nu'mān b. Thābit, (6) Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb b. Muḥammad al-Anṣārī, and (7) Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī, a *mawlā* of the Shaybān, and (8) Abū Naṣr Ibrāhīm b. Khālid al-Kalbī.³⁵⁰

In his work, Ṭabarī had originally included one of the Mu'tazilites (*aḥl al-naẓar*), namely, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Kaysān, because at the time when (Ṭabarī) was working on (*Ikhtilāf*), (Ibn Kaysān's) views were not used as the basis for a(n unacceptable) legal school.³⁵¹ After some time, however, (Ibn Kaysān's) colleagues and students expressed poorly informed legal views, and Ṭabarī excluded him from his work.

I heard Ṭabarī respond to a question (about the history of *Ikhtilāf*) he was asked by Abū 'Abdallāh Aḥmad b. 'Īsā al-Rāzī.³⁵² He said that he had first undertaken to work on it in order to mention the views of those opposed to his (own views). The work then gained wider circulation, and he was asked by his colleagues and students (who were adherents of his school) to lecture on it.

When Muḥammad b. Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī³⁵³ published his book known under the title of *al-Wuṣūl ilā ma'rifat al-uṣūl*,

349. Ṭabarī studied with him in Egypt; see above, n. 100.

350. He must be Abū Thawr, although Abū Thawr's *kunya* was doubtful and is sometimes said to have been Abū 'Abdallāh, while Abū Thawr was a nickname; see Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 74; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahdhīb*, I, 118. For Abū Thawr, see above, n. 272. The numbering has been added in the translation.

351. Possibly the famous Abū Bakr 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Kaysān al-Aṣamm, who died long before Ṭabarī was born, is meant. See Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 624 f.; Ritter, in his edition of Ash'ari, *Maqālāt*, 617.

352. He is certainly not identical with the 'Alid mentioned above, n. 186, and remains unidentified. This is particularly regrettable, since knowing about him might have clarified who the speaker here was.

353. See above, 68 f.

he mentioned in the chapter on general consensus (*ijmā'*) as the view of Ṭabarī that *ijmā'* meant the consensus of the afore-mentioned eight jurists to the exclusion of everybody else. He based himself on Ṭabarī's statement: "They agreed (*ajma'ū*), and thereby agreement was reached on the point being argued." (Ṭabarī) then said in the introduction of the chapter on disagreement (*khilāf*): "Then they disagreed. Mālik held one view, al-Awzā'ī another, and so-and-so still another." (Combining the two statements, Muḥammad b. Dāwūd concluded) that those for whom Ṭabarī reported consensus were identical with those for whom he reported disagreement.³⁵⁴ This is an error on the part of Ibn Dāwūd. Had he considered what Ṭabarī had written in the *Risālah* of Laṭīf and the *Risālah* of *Ikhtilāf* (and) in many of his works, namely, that *ijmā'* is the uninterrupted transmission of traditions agreed upon by the Companions of the Messenger of God, and not something based on opinion or deduced by analogical reasoning, he would have realized that the view expressed by him (as to Ṭabarī's understanding of *ijmā'*) was a grievous error and obvious mistake.

Abū Ja'far thought highly of his *Ikhtilāf*, which was the first of his works (to be put in publishable form, *ṣunnifa*). He often said to me: "I have written two books that are indispensable for jurists, *Ikhtilāf* and *Laṭīf*."

Ikhtilāf is about three thousand folios. In order not to repeat himself, he did not deal in it with his own preferences (as to what he considered the correct view in each case),³⁵⁵ because he had done a good job in this respect in *Laṭīf*.

He had written for *Ikhtilāf* an introductory *risālah*, which he later dropped.³⁵⁶ In it, he discussed general consensus and traditions originating with single authorities of recognized probity (*al-āḥād al-'udūl*), additions³⁵⁷ not in *Laṭīf*, as

354. Ergo, the jurists considered in *Ikhtilāf* represented consensus in every sense.

355. But see above, n. 216.

356. Or: "which he later stopped lecturing on," which is the same thing. It does not mean: "which he separated (from *Ikhtilāf* and treated as a separate work)."

357. This translation seems possible and has therefore been preferred to the text in ed. Rifā'i. Supplying the preposition 'inda, it yields the rather different sense: "discussing consensus and traditions . . . , he mentioned additions not in *Laṭīf* . . ."

well as *marāsīl* traditions³⁵⁸ and abrogation (*al-nāsikh wa-al-mansūkh*).

Irshād, VI, 437, ll. 1–6, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 59, ll. 2–8, also reports the following dubious statement in connection with the Ḥanbalite affair discussed above, 73 ff.:

Ṭabarī secluded himself in his house and produced his well-known book containing his apology (*i'tidhār*) to the (Ḥanbalites). He mentioned his own legal views (*madhhab*) and dogmatic beliefs. He declared unreliable those who thought differently about him with respect to these matters. He lectured to them (*qara'a 'alā*) on the book. He extolled Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal and mentioned his legal views (*madhhab*) and dogmatic beliefs as being correct. He continued to refer to him constantly until he died. His book on *ikhtilāf* was not made public by him before he died. It was buried in the ground and made public and copied (*n-s-kh*, by the Ḥanbalites) — I mean *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā'*. I heard this from a number of people, including my father.³⁵⁹

Ikhtilāf is listed in Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl. I, 218, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328. For the editions of Kern and Schacht, see below, Bibliography, under *Ikhtilāf*. The reprints of Kern's edition mentioned by C. Gilliot, in *Studia Islamica*, 63 (1986): 189–92, were not available. The title of the manuscript published by Schacht is *Mukhtaṣar Ikhtilāf 'ulamā' al-amṣār* (see p. IX); there may be at least some truth to the statement that it was indeed an abridgment (see also above, n. 216).

In *Tabṣīr*, fol. 92b, Ṭabarī refers to his *Kitāb Ahl al-baghy* "On wrongdoers (rebels)." Since *Tabṣīr* is greatly concerned with differences of opinion and *Ikhtilāf* had a book on the subject (see ed. Schacht, X), it stands to reason that the reference is to *Ikhtilāf* and not to another of Ṭabarī's legal writings.

358. A *mursal* tradition is one with an *isnād* that does not lead back all the way to the Prophet.

359. Perhaps, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Hārūn(?), mentioned *Irshād*, VI, 435, l. 5, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 56, l. 14, is meant as the son of Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz mentioned in *Irshād* a few lines later. Abū 'Alī Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz appears as a transmitter of information from Ṭabarī in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII, l. 17, and LXXXIV, l. 16 (see below, 106 f.). All this is more than uncertain. The suspicion remains that the narrator was perhaps an unidentified Ḥanbalite.

Irshād, VI, 435, ll. 12 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 57, l. 5, refers to the *Kitāb al-Janā'iz* "On funerals" of *Ikhtilāf*. A few possible cross-references to non-preserved parts of *Ikhtilāf* are listed by Kern, "Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf*," 65. In his edition, I, 50, Kern includes a reference to *Kitāb al-Aymān wa-al-nudhūr* "On oaths and vows."³⁶⁰ He also reproduced (II, 123–5) the text of two quotations found in Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, dealing with Ṭabarī's discussion of masturbation and anal intercourse in *Ikhtilāf*.³⁶¹ Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī wrote this section of his large work in 1168/1755. Thus, as late as the middle of the twelfth/eighteenth century, Ṭabarī's *Ikhtilāf* was used, apparently directly. See further Muranyi, "*Kitāb al-Siyar*," 84 f.

[*al-I'tidhār* "Apology (to the Ḥanbalites)": See *Ikhtilāf*

This is obviously not a formal title. It was not a work published by Ṭabarī and may have existed only in Ḥanbalite wishful thinking.]

Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān "The complete clarification of the interpretation of the verses of the Qur'ān"

This official title of Ṭabarī's great Qur'ān commentary (*Tafsīr*) is mentioned in *History*: see below, text, I, 87, translation, n. 562. It never gained much popularity and was almost always replaced by the simple *Tafsīr*.³⁶² The work is mentioned in all Ṭabarī biographies, large and small, and usually praised very highly. During his lifetime, it probably was considered his outstanding scholarly achievement, even more so than his great works on law and *ḥadīth*. It has retained its outstanding importance to this day. It says much for the general esteem accorded to the work that the Christian philosopher and theologian Yaḥyā b. 'Adī, who died

360. Other similar references are believed by Kern to be derived from *Laṭīf* (see below, 116). He concluded, it seems, that this was so from the phrase "in our book, the book on . . .". In contrast, Ṭabarī here does not have "in our book" but only "*Kitāb al-Aymān* . . ."

361. See Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī, *Ithāf*, V, 306 and 375. He introduces the quotation as coming from *Ikhtilāf al-fuqahā*.

362. *Irshād* omits *āy* in one instance [misprint?]. The work is quoted exceptionally as *al-Bayān* in Zarkashī, *Burhān*, I, 214.

in his eighties in 363/974, reportedly copied it twice for sale to provincial rulers.³⁶³

The work took many years to complete. In 270/883[4],³⁶⁴ a substantial portion was made public by Ṭabarī in the form of public lectures. Between 283/896 and 290/903, if not earlier, the entire work was ready for publication.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah* was written on a volume of *Tafsīr*. He referred to the work as "*Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, entitled *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*."³⁶⁵ Al-Farghānī also provided the information to be found in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX.³⁶⁶

Among his completed works is his excellent *Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān*. He explained in it the legal data derived from the Qur'ān, its abrogating and abrogated verses, its difficult passages, and its rare words. (He also discussed) the disagreements between commentators and religious scholars with respect to the Qur'ān's legal data and its interpretation together with an indication of what he considered the correct view in each case, its proper vocalization (*i'rāb ḥurūfihī*), the condemnation of heretics in it, the (biblical and other) stories, the reports on the nations (of the world), the Resurrection, and other wise statements and marvelous matters. He did that word by word, verse by verse, from the beginning where the formula "I take refuge in God" is used, to the letters of the alphabet.³⁶⁷ If a scholar claimed that he could write ten books based on it, of which each would deal with a special remarkable subject that is exhaustively presented, he could do it.

Al-Farghānī, at least in part through Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz,³⁶⁸ also told the following anecdotes, as reported in Ibn 'Asākir,

363. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 264, ll. 9 f.

364. It is tempting to think of a mistake for 290, but this common error seems to be most unlikely in this case; see below, n. 371.

365. See *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 16, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44, ll. 15 f.

366. Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 373, ll. 6–8, depends on Ibn 'Asākir.

For a succinct survey of the numerous publications on the various topics of Qur'ānic science, which existed in the fourth/tenth century, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*.

367. The formula *a'ūdhu bi-Allāh* used before the recitation of the Qur'ān is discussed in *Tafsīr*, I, 37 f. For the letters of "*abū jād*," see below, n. 379.

368. See above, n. 359.

LXXXII, ll. 17–9, and l. 19–LXXXIII, l. 2:

For three years before I went to work on the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*, I asked God for permission to produce the work and for His help in doing what I had in mind, and He did help me.

Al-Farghānī (through Hārūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz ?) said: A chaste neighbor³⁶⁹ of Abū Ja'far told me: I had a dream in which I saw myself in the classroom (*majlis*) of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī when his *Tafsīr* was studied with him. I heard a voice coming from in between heaven and earth say: He who wants to study the Qur'ān as it was revealed should study this work.

Irshād, VI, 439, l. 3–441, l. 17, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 61, l. 17–65, l. 13, is an obvious composite of sources, but most of the factual information appears to come from 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī's monograph, through Ibn Kāmil:

His book entitled *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl al-Qur'ān*.³⁷⁰ Abū Bakr b. Kāmil says: He dictated (*amlā*) to us one hundred and ninety verses of the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*. Thereafter, he continued to the end of the Qur'ān and read (the entire work?) to us. This was in 270/883[4].³⁷¹ The work (soon) became very famous. Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Yahyā Tha'lab and Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, the great authorities on grammar and semantics (*i'rāb* and *ma'ānī*), were still alive at the time, as were other expert Arab grammarians such as Abū Ja'far al-Rustamī, Abū Ḥasan b. Kaysān, al-Mufaḍḍal b. Salamah, al-Ja'd, and Abū Ishāq al-Zajjāj.³⁷² The *Tafsīr* achieved wide distribution in East and West. All contemporary scholars read it, and all considered

369. This is the hardly credible meaning of the text. *Irshād*, VI, 439, ll. 17 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 63, l. 2, has "a shaykh from the Bridge of Ibn 'Afīf" (= "chaste"). To my knowledge, no such bridge occurs in the topographical works, but it is likely to be the correct reading. Ibn 'Asākir may have miscopied the same source, or the corruption may have occurred in the textual tradition of his work. Though missing in *Irshād*, "neighbor" may be original, thus placing the man in al-Mukharriṣ or nearby in East Baghdad.

370. See above, n. 362.

371. While the preceding sentence seems to speak of the entire work, the date appears to be intended for those lectures on the first sūrah and part of the second sūrah.

372. All the authors named in this and the following paragraphs of the quotation

it truly excellent.

Abū Ja'far said: I felt the inner urge to write the work when I was still a child.

'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī quoted Abū 'Umar al-Zāhid³⁷³ as saying: For a long time, I made my living collating books with people. (Once) I asked Abū Ja'far about the interpretation of a verse. He said: Collate (*qābil*) this work (*Tafsīr*) from beginning to end! (I did) and could not find a single wrong reading (*ḥarf*) with respect to grammar and lexicography.

Abū Ja'far said: (This and the next paragraph have been translated above from Ibn 'Asākir.)

Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Mujāhid said: I heard Abū Ja'far say: I wonder how anyone who reads the Qur'ān and does not know its interpretation can enjoy reading it.³⁷⁴

He started the *Kitāb al-Tafsīr* with an invocation (*khuṭbah*). The introductory essay (*risālah*) of *Tafsīr* proves the eloquence, inimitability (*i'jāz*), and clarity of expression (*faṣāḥah*), not matched anywhere else, with which God has distinguished the Qur'ān. Among introductory topics (*muqaddamāt*), he discussed commenting on (*tafsīr*) and ways of interpreting (*wujūh al-ta'wīl*) the Qur'ān, the interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of what is known³⁷⁵ and what has been indicated as permitted to comment on (*tafsīr*) as well as what is forbidden (see *Tafsīr*, I, 25-27, 31 f.). He discussed the Prophet's statement that "the Qur'ān was revealed in seven letters" (see *Tafsīr*, I, 9-25),³⁷⁶ further, in which tongues the

are so well-known that it would be superfluous to comment on them. For chronological purposes, it is interesting to notice that Tha'lab died in 291/904 (above, n. 178), and al-Mubarrad in 285-6/898-9. For Abū Ja'far Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Rustam (d. about 310/922), see Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 160 f.; for Abū [al-]Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Kaysān (d. about 299/911 or later?), see Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 170, Sezgin, *GAS*, IX, 158-60; for al-Mufaddal b. Salamah (d. about 290/903), see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 191, *GAS*, IX, 139 f.; for Muḥammad b. Uthmān al-Ja'd (d. about 320/932), see *GAS*, IX, 163; and for Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. al-Sarī al-Zajjāj (d. 310/922 or later), see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 170, *GAS*, IX, 81 f.

373. See above, n. 179.

374. A rather similar remark is ascribed to Sa'īd b. Jubayr in *Tafsīr*, I, 28, ll. 12 f.: "He who reads the Qur'ān and then does not interpret it is like a blind man or a Bedouin." "Muḥammad" is a mistake for Aḥmad.

375. Or "can be known, is knowable" by human beings, and not only by God.

376. See *Concordance*, I, 448b, and Gilliot, "Les sept lectures."

Qur'ān was revealed, and he refuted those who said that it contains non-Arabic words (see *Tafsīr*, I, 6 ff.).³⁷⁷ He mentioned the interpretation of the names of the Qur'ān and the sūrahs (see *Tafsīr*, I, 32-35), and other such introductory matters. He had this followed by the interpretation of the Qur'ān letter by letter. He mentioned the statements of the Companions, the Followers, and those who followed the Followers, the discussions of the Kūfan and Baṣran grammarians (*ahl al-i'rāb*), and a number (*jumal*) of Qur'ān readings and the variant readings of (the schools of) Qur'ān reading concerning root forms (*maṣādir*), lexicography/dialectology (*luḡāt*), plurals, and duals. He discussed the abrogating and abrogated verses of the Qur'ān, its legal data, and differences in this respect. He mentioned some of the statements of the speculative theologians (*ahl al-naẓar*)³⁷⁸ as made by some innovators, and he refuted them according to the views (*madhāhib*) of the affirmers (*ahl al-ithbāt*, the "orthodox") and as required by the traditions (*sunan*), all the way to the end of the Qur'ān. He had this followed by the interpretation of the alphabet and its letters, the different opinions of people concerning them, and how he himself preferred to interpret them.³⁷⁹ Nobody could add anything to it, nor would he find the subject treated as completely by anybody else.

He used in it the (earlier) commentaries by Ibn 'Abbās in five recensions, Sa'īd b. Jubayr in two recensions, Mujāhid b. Jabr in three, and often more, recensions, Qatādah b. Di'āmah in three recensions, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī in three recensions, 'Ikrimah in three recensions, al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim in two recensions, and 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd in one recension. He further used the commentaries of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Zayd b. Aslam, Ibn Jurayj, and Muqātil b. Ḥayyān. Moreover, (*Tafsīr*) contains well known traditions on the authority of the Qur'ān commentators and others. It includes all that is needed of traditions transmitted with an

377. See, however, above, 45 f.

378. See, for instance, Appendix A, below, 149-51.

379. The discussion of phonetics and orthography is not included in the introduction of *Tafsīr*. As indicated here, it supposedly appeared at the end of the entire work. The text as published does not contain it.

uninterrupted chain of transmitters mainly from the Prophet (*musnad al-ḥadīth*).

He paid no attention to unreliable (commentators). Thus, the work contains no (traditions) from the works of Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, Muqātil b. Ḥayyān, or Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, because he considered them suspect (as Qur'ān and ḥadīth scholars). But when he referred to history, biography, or Arab stories, he did include reports from Muḥammad b. Sā'ib al-Kalbī, his son Hishām, Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī, and others, whatever was needed and could be found only in their works.³⁸⁰

In *Tafsīr*, he mentioned numerous discussions and suggested meanings (*ma'ānī*) from the books of 'Alī b. Ḥamzah al-Kisā'i, Yaḥyā b. Ziyād al-Farrā', Abū al-Ḥasan al-Akhfash, Abū 'Alī Qutrūb, and others, whenever needed as required by the discussion. These (famous grammarians and lexicographers) were the ones who discussed the meanings and provided (explanations for Qur'ānic) meanings and grammar (*ma'ānī al-i'rāb*). When he quoted from them, he often did not mention them by name.

This work comprises ten thousand folios, or fewer, depending on the size of the script. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Muḥammad al-Ṭabarī said: I have seen a manuscript in Baghdad which comprised four thousand folios.

The task of commenting on *Tafsīr* and condensing it started early. A Mu'tazilite of Turkish origin, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Bayghjūr, known as Ibn al-Ikshshēd, who lived in Sūq al-'Aṭash and died in 326/938, wrote an abridgment.³⁸¹ A commentary written by Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī in competition with Ṭabarī was judged by history to have been a failure.³⁸² Among Abū Bakr's authorities, we find Ibn Bashshār and Ibn al-Muthannā who figure so prominently in Ṭabarī's works.

380. The sharp distinction made by Ṭabarī between historians and specialists in other fields is noteworthy.

381. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 173 (also 34, l. 14, and 235, l. 3); *TB*, IV, 309. *M-'-j-w-r*, as his ancestor's name is spelled in *Fihrist*, is an implausible form. The reading *B-y-gh-j-w-r* of *TB* is more likely as a Turkish-Persian name. See, for instance, Bakjūr (*Eclipse*, index, s. v. Bekjūr).

382. See above, n. 229.

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl., I, 218, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 327, for literature and editions. *Tafsīr* became known in Europe only about the time that the publication of *History* started.³⁸³ It was first printed in Cairo 1321/1903 and 1323/1905, reprinted in Beirut, 1400/1980. The edition Cairo 1323 is considered the better of the two.³⁸⁴ Modern printings, such as one edited by Maḥmūd M. Shākir and A. M. Shākir (Cairo, 1961), regrettably fail to indicate the paginations of the earlier editions.

An abridged French translation by Pierre Godé has been appearing in Paris since 1983. An English translation by J. Cooper has been announced for 1986. The first volumes of Godé's work have been seen by me.

[*Al-Jāmi' fī al-qirā'āt* "The complete collection of variant readings in the Qur'ān": See *Faṣl*]

[*Al-Janā'iz* "On funerals": See *Ikhtilāf*]

[*Al-Jirāh* "On wounds": See *Laṭīf*]

Al-Khafīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The light work on the laws of the Muslim religion"

This full title of what was a condensed version of *Laṭīf* appears in Ibn 'Asākir, LXXX, ll. 2 f.,³⁸⁵ and *Irshād*; see below. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, has *al-Khafīf fī al-fiqh*, followed somewhat incongruously by the word *laṭīf*. Ibn 'Asākir similarly states that the work, which was completed by Ṭabarī, was "a slim abridgment (*mukhtaṣar laṭīf*)." A law book of four hundred folios could indeed be called "slender,"³⁸⁶ but it is tempting to assume with Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit," 364, n. 11, that in the *Fihrist* as well as Ibn 'Asākir, the intended meaning was "an abridgment of *Laṭīf*." Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, ll. 10 f., describes the work merely as "a short work (*mukhtaṣar*) on jurisprudence." The reference to *Laṭīf* in Qiftī, *Inbāh*, III, 90, is followed by one to

383. See Loth, "Ṭabarī's Korancommentar."

384. See Nöldeke-Schwally-Bergsträsser-Pretzl, III, 240.

385. Reproduced by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 13.

386. On the double meaning of *laṭīf*, see below, 113 and 115.

another work described as "a treatise (*maqālah*) on jurisprudence used by scholars (in their legal work)." *Khafif* is presumably meant here.

The composition of *Khafif* must be dated between 291/904 when al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan was appointed wazīr, and 296/908 when he lost his life. One might assume that al-'Abbās may not yet have been wazīr (and al-Muktafī not yet caliph) at the time Ṭabarī wrote *Khafif*; this, however, seems unlikely. It should be noted that the *nisbah* al-'Azīzī indicated in *Irshād* is not attested elsewhere for the wazīr, nor is any other *nisbah*, as far as I know. On the other hand, the *kunyah* Abū Aḥmad seems confirmed by the existence of a son of his named Aḥmad.³⁸⁷

Following al-Farghānī, Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXVI, l. 18–LXXVII, l. 2, combines the anecdote of Ṭabarī's refusal of al-Muktafī's gift (see above, 37 f.), in which the wazīr al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan played a role, with a similar anecdote involving the reason for the composition of *Khafif*:

Al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan³⁸⁸ sent a message to Ṭabarī telling him that he wished to study jurisprudence, and asked him to produce a short work (*mukhtaṣar*) according to his legal school for him. Ṭabarī wrote for him the *Kitāb al-Khafif* and dispatched it to him. When al-'Abbās sent him a thousand dinārs, he did not accept the money but returned it to him. He was told to use it for charity. He did not want to do that. He said: You (using the plural addressing al-'Abbās) know better how to use your money and to whom to give charity.

The fullest information is found in *Irshād*, VI, 448, ll. 8–12, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 74, ll. 11–18:

One of his excellent works is the book entitled *Kitāb al-Khafif fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*, an abridgment of the *Kitāb al-Laṭif*. Abū Aḥmad al-'Abbās b. al-Ḥasan al-'Azīzī wanted to look into some legal matters and corresponded with Ṭabarī concerning an abridgment of one of his works. Ṭabarī produced this book in order to facilitate the under-

387. See 'Arib, 63.

388. In Dhahabī's very abridged quotation (*Nubalā*', XIV, 270, ll. 14 f.), *al-wazīr* replaces the proper name. In the similar anecdote, above, 39, the wazīr is al-Khāqānī.

standing of the subject. It is about four hundred folios. It is a book that makes the subject easy for the person who studies it. It contains (the discussion of) many problems which both scholars and beginning students would do well to memorize.

According to Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, al-Mu'āfā wrote a commentary on *Khafīf*.

Al-Laṭīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām "The slim³⁸⁹ work on the laws of the Muslim religion" or, more commonly, *Laṭīf al-qawl*.... "The slim discussion of ...".

The second form of the title appears *Ikhtilāf*, ed. Kern (II, 29, 79, 83, 90 f.) with the substitution of the synonymous *al-dīn* for *al-Islām*. The first form is found in the introduction of *Tafsīr* (I, 37, ll. 13 ff.):

We have explained briefly what we considered the correct statement here in our book *al-Laṭīf fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. God willing, we shall give an exhaustive explanation and report the statements of the Companions, the Followers, and ancient and recent scholars in our great work on the laws of the Muslim religion (*kitābunā al-akbar fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*).³⁹⁰

In *Tafsīr*, the work is constantly cited under slightly different titles, such as *Laṭīf al-qawl fī sharā'i' al-Islām* (XVIII, 68, l. 12), or ...*aḥkām sharā'i' al-dīn* (VIII, 16, l. 7) as in *Ikhtilāf*, or *Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām al-sharā'i'* (VIII, 28, l. 31), or simply *al-Laṭīf* (II, 252, l. 17, 289, l. 11).³⁹¹ But the work is also referred to by the title or contents of its individual "books," with no reference to the overall designation.

389. The source of *Irshād* (below, 115) claims that Ṭabarī himself did not intend *laṭīf* in its physical meaning but in its metaphorical meaning of "subtle." However, Ṭabarī, in fact, meant to imply that in comparison to the enormous mass of data to be discussed, *Laṭīf* was, in spite of its considerable size, a slim and concise work. The flattering interpretation was no doubt owing to a student and admirer.

390. See also above, under *Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*.

391. *Tafsīr*, VI, 44, l. 16, has a dubious *al-Laṭīf (!) al-qawl fī al-aḥkām* (misprint?). Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 10, lists *Laṭīf* as "*Kitāb Aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*, composed in accordance with the results of his independent judgment." The form of the title possibly results from a confusion with the larger planned work.

The title *al-Laṭīf min al-bayān 'an aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām* (*Tafsīr*, II, 264, ll. 11 f.) includes *al-bayān*, which properly belongs to the title of the introductory *risālah* on legal principles (see II, 269, l. 10, where, in the same context, *uṣūl* is included). The *risālah* was no doubt at times published separately and then carried the title of *al-Bayān 'an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (I, 404, l. 4, II, 31, ll. 1 f., V, 7, l. 16, VI, 159, l. 19, XV, 59, l. 21, XVIII, 99, l. 15). Here the operative word is *uṣūl* "principles." It is also combined with *laṭīf* to yield such hybrids as *Laṭīf al-qawl min al-bayān 'an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (I, 276, l. 24, II, 269, l. 10, also *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, 770, where *fī* replaces *min*), or *Laṭīf al-bayān 'an uṣūl al-aḥkām* (III, 12, l. 14, VII, 200, ll. 15 f., X, 29, l. 27), or even *al-Laṭīf 'an uṣūl aḥkām* (VIII, 79, l. 11). The short title *al-Laṭīf min al-bayān* (II, 222, l. 15) clearly refers to the *risālah*.

The work is widely listed in Ṭabarī biographies. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, has two references. On p. 234, l. 24, we read: "*Kitāb al-Laṭīf* on jurisprudence. It comprises..., " while ll. 20 f., states:

Kitāb al-Laṭīf on jurisprudence. It comprises a number of books on the order of juridical works *fī al-mabsūṭ*.³⁹² The number of books of *Laṭīf* is....

The missing number is supplied by Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX f., from al-Farghānī:

Also complete is *Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. It represents his legal school with his own preferred views well presented³⁹³ and argued. It consists of eighty-three books, including *Kitāb al-Bayān 'an uṣūl al-Islām*, which is the [general introductory] essay (*risālah*) of *Laṭīf*.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah*, as quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 429, ll. 19 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 43, ll. 1 f., has *Kitāb Laṭīf al-qawl wa-khaṭīfihī fī sharā'i' al-Islām*. This may possibly refer to *Laṭīf* and its condensation *Khaṭīf*. A translation "A slender and light discussion

392. In the context, this hardly refers to a specific work entitled *al-Mabsūṭ* (such as the one by the Hanafite al-Shaybānī). It is probably to be understood as a work on laws well-organized and easily understandable, such as was the case with works given *Mabsūṭ* as a title.

393. Read *jawwadahū*, as is found in Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, II, 285 f., and Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 10 f., who both depend on Ibn 'Asākir.

of Muslim laws" makes little sense, even if *Irshād* in the passage to be quoted associates the two descriptive terms with the work.

Irshād, VI, 447, l. 11–448, l. 7, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 73, l. 8–74, l. 10, describes *Laṭīf* as follows:

His book entitled *Kitāb Laṭīf al-qawl fī aḥkām sharā'i' al-Islām*. It is the sum total of his legal school and is relied upon by all its followers. It is among the most valuable of his own books and those of other jurists as well, because it is the best and most instructive of any textbook of a legal school. God willing, this will be obvious to everybody who reads it carefully.

Abū Bakr b. Rāmīk³⁹⁴ used to say: No better book on a legal school has ever been produced than the *Laṭīf* of Abū Ja'far on his legal school.

In the beginning of the work, Ṭabarī much apologized for its brevity. The books of *Laṭīf* exceed those of *Ikhtilāf* by (!) three, namely, *Kitāb al-Libās* "on clothing," *Kitāb Ummahāt al-awlād* "on slave girls giving birth to children by their masters," and *Kitāb al-Shurb* "on drink."³⁹⁵ *Laṭīf* is one of the very best books. Ṭabarī is unique with respect to it. Nobody should think that by calling it *al-Laṭīf* ("slim" or "subtle"), he meant to imply that it was of small size and its content of light weight. He wished the title to be understood as referring to the subtlety of the ideas expressed in it and the numerous critical discussions (*naẓar*) and indications of reasons (for points of law) it contains. It is about 2,500 folios. It includes a good book on *shurūṭ* (document forms) entitled *Amthilat al-'udūl* from *Laṭīf*.³⁹⁶ The work has

394. Ibn Rāmīk remains to be identified.

395. It is understandable that Ṣafādī, *Wāfi*, 286, ll. 3 f., thought of independent treatises.

396. See above, under *Amthilat al-'udūl*. Hājī Khalīfah, ed. Yalṭkaya, II, 1046, refers to Ṭabarī's "exhaustive treatment of *shurūṭ* in a book according to the legal principles of al-Shāfi'ī," which was "plagiarized" by Abū Ja'far al-Ṭahāwī (see Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 441) when he wrote on the subject. Al-Ṭahāwī outlived Ṭabarī by only a few years. Wakin, *Documents*, 23, n. 6, doubts the correctness of Hājī Khalīfah's statement. It may be noted that Ibn Kāmil also wrote on *shurūṭ* (see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 32, l. 14). He would seem to be a more likely candidate for dependence on Ṭabarī. It was, of course, a common topic.

a *risālah* in which there are discussed the principles of jurisprudence, consensus (*ijmā'*), traditions going back to only one transmitter (*āḥād*),³⁹⁷ *marāsīl* traditions,³⁹⁸ abrogations as they affect the legal situation, and traditions (*akhbār*) and commands and prohibitions which are summary and require explanation (*mujmal*) and which are interpreted (*mufassar*), the actions of the messengers, (passages with) general and specific (application, *al-khuṣūṣ wa-al-'umūm*), and independent judgment, the invalidity of expressing unsupported legal opinions (*istiḥsān*), and other debated matters.

Some information on *Laṭīf* is provided by cross-references in other works of Ṭabarī. It is, however, not always clear which section of *Laṭīf* is precisely aimed at. All the references in *Ikhtilāf* (ed. Kern, II, 29, 79, 83, 90 f., 103, 115) concern certain aspects of *kafālah* "surety bond, bail." This, however, need not mean that they all go back to the same book of *Laṭīf*. The discussion of surety bond in cases of contractual manumission (*mukātabah*, ed. Kern, II, 79, 83) may have had its place in that context. In fact, a *Kitāb al-Rahn* "On surety deposits" and a *Kitāb al-Ghuṣūb* (!) "On laws concerning robbery/rape by force" (ed. Kern, II, 103, 115) are indicated as sources in connection with problems of *kafālah*.³⁹⁹ The situation with regard to the remaining citations is more ambiguous.

Tafsīr often refers to the introductory *risālah* of *Laṭīf* for problems of the general and specific (*al-khuṣūṣ wa-al-'umūm*),⁴⁰⁰ abrogation (*al-nāsikh wa-al-mansūkh*),⁴⁰¹ command and prohibi-

397. See *Tahdhīb*, *Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, 770.

398. See above, n. 358.

399. See above, n. 360.

400. *Tafsīr*, I, 276, ll. 24 f., *ad Qur.* 2:69, expressly refers to the subject of *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ*. Further references in *Tafsīr*, I, 404, l. 4. *ad Qur.* 2:116, II, 269, l. 10, *ad Qur.* 2:228, V, 7, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 4:24.

401. See *Tafsīr*, II, 222, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 2:221, III, 12, l. 14, *ad Qur.* 2:256 (possibly referring to *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ*), VI, 159, l. 19, *ad Qur.* 5:142, VIII, 79, l. 11, *ad Qur.* 6:159. The passage *Tafsīr*, VII, 200, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 75:22 f., referring to the beatific vision, may also have to do with abrogation. Discussions of abrogation, such as, for instance, *Tafsīr*, IX, 135, l. 17, *ad Qur.* 8:16, or X, 58, l. 5, *ad Qur.* 9:6, are quite likely to belong to the introductory *risālah*, even though they occur unassigned.

tion (*al-amr wa-al-nahy*),⁴⁰² and, possibly, consensus (*ijmā'*)⁴⁰³ and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*).⁴⁰⁴ The reference in *Tahdhīb, Musnad Ibn 'Abbās*, II, 770, concerns the permissibility of acting on the basis of a tradition transmitted from a single authority (see above, n. 397) and thus goes back to the *risālah*.

References to other parts of *Laṭīf* are usually more difficult to assign: *Tafsīr*, I, 37, ll. 13 f., on the "seven verses" of the first sūrah and the inclusion of the *basmalah* in the count (possibly from the *risālah* ?), II, 252, l. 17, *ad Qur.* 2:226, on oaths (or on intercourse), II, 264, ll. 11 f., 289, l. 11, *ad Qur.* 2:228 and 229, on divorce, [II, 352, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 2:238, on prayer, to be dealt with in the planned larger work, above, n. 390], V, 134, l. 13, *ad Qur.* 4:94, on blood money, VI, 44, l. 16, *ad Qur.* 5:3, on the meat of dead animals, VII, 28, l. 31, *ad Qur.* 5:95, on hunting (in the Sacred Territory), VIII, 16, l. 7, *ad Qur.* 6:121, on the meat of properly slaughtered animals (see above, n. 404), XIV, 93, l. 8, *ad Qur.* 16:67, on intoxication, thus probably from *Kitāb al-Shurb*, and XVIII, 68, l. 12, *ad Qur.* 24:9, mentioning *bāb al-li'ān* "the chapter on the *li'ān*⁴⁰⁵ formula of divorce."

[*Al-Libās* "On clothing": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Maḥāḍir wa-al-sijillāt* "On records and documents": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Manāsik* "On the pilgrimage ritual": See *Ādāb al-manāsik*]

[*Marātib al-'ulamā'* "On the classification of scholars": See *Basīṭ*]

Al-Mūjaz fī al-uṣūl "A concise treatment of the [legal] principles"

Irshād, VI, 453, l. 3, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81, ll. 5 f.:

Kitāb al-Mūjaz fī al-uṣūl. He began it with a treatise on

402. See *Tafsīr*, X, 29, l. 27, *ad Qur.* 8:66, XVIII, 99, l. 15, *ad Qur.* 24:33 (dealing with contractual manumission). A connection with *al-'umūm wa-al-khuṣūṣ* may exist in *Tafsīr*, XV, 59, l. 21, *ad Qur.* 17:33.

403. See *Tafsīr*, II, 31, ll. 1 f., *ad Qur.* 2:158.

404. See *Tafsīr*, VIII, 16, l. 7, *ad Qur.* 6:121, listed in the following paragraph.

405. See *EP*, V, 730-2, s.v. *li'ān*.

moral behavior (*risālat al-akhlāq*), but then discontinued (lecturing on it).

The title is also listed in Şafadī, *Wāfī*, II, 286, ll. 6 f. We do not know whether Ṭabarī stopped work on it because of old age or because he had other projects to which he gave priority. See also above, *al-Ādar (?) fī al-uşūl*.

Mukhtaşar al-farā'id "A short work on the religious duties"

No more than the title is known about this presumptive monograph mentioned in *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 1 f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 81, ll. 3 f.

[*Mukhtaşar Manāsik al-ḥajj* "A short work (abridgment of the work ?) on the ritual of the pilgrimage": See *Ādāb al-Manāsik*]

[*Mukhtaşar Ta'riḫ* ... "The short work on the history of...": See *Ta'riḫ*]

[*Musnad Ibn 'Abbās* "The Prophetical traditions transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās": See *Tahdhīb*]

[*Al-Musnad al-mukharraj* "The Prophetical traditions made public".

Ibn 'Asākir mentions *Tahdhīb* but also refers in another place (Ibn 'Asākir, LXXXII) to this title and describes the work as "unfinished and containing all the traditions, sound or unsound, transmitted by the Companions on the authority of the Messenger of God." It is, however, reasonable to assume that the work is identical with *Tahdhīb*, and the title derives from another bibliographical tradition.]

[*Al-Mustarshid* "The seeker of guidance"

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, l. 4, has this title among the works of Ṭabarī. However, as discovered by Goldziher, "Die literarische Thätigkeit," 359, Ṭūsī, *Fihrist*, 187, states that the author of *Mustarshid* was, in fact, not the historian but a certain Abū Ja'far

Muḥammad b. Jarīr b. Rustam al-Ṭabarī.⁴⁰⁶

Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 540, lists *Kitāb al-Mustarshid* on the imāmate of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as existing in manuscripts and having been printed in al-Najaf (not available to me). He further lists as works of the same Ibn Rustam two more titles, *Dalā'il al-imāmah* and *Bishārat al-Murtaḍā*. According to Sezgin, the author of all three works probably died in the first quarter of the fourth/tenth century. However, the published text of *Dalā'il al-imāmah* dealing with the twelve imāms (al-Najaf, 1369/1949) cites al-Mu'āfā among its authorities. This precludes a composition of the work in its present form before the end of the century at the earliest. On the other hand, the text also refers to its supposed author (?) Abū Ja'far as having, among his authorities, Sufyān b. Wakī' (d. 247/861)⁴⁰⁷ — his father, an *isnād* much used by Ṭabarī. Our admittedly defective knowledge of *Dalā'il al-imāmah* suggests that it was a compilation of post-Ṭabarian date.

The situation with respect to *Bishārat al-Muṣṭafā li-Shī'at al-Murtaḍā* is equally uncertain. The title was listed erroneously by Brockelmann among Ṭabarī's works (see *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, no. 7). Modern scholars ascribe its authorship to various unknown individuals. In the edition al-Najaf, 1383/1963, the name of Muḥammad b. Abī al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī is found. Ibrāhīm, in the introduction to his Ṭabarī edition (ed. Cairo, I, 20) (see also Hūfī, 253) refers to *al-Dhārī'ah ilā muṣannafāt al-Shī'ah*, III, 117, for the information that the author's name was Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muslim al-Ṭabarī al-Āmulī. Aghā Buzurg al-Ṭīhrānī, *Ṭabaqāt a'lām al-Shī'ah*, 242, names Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī 'Imād al-dīn al-Ṭabarī al-Āmulī. Only one thing is clear: Ṭabarī had nothing to do with the work.

Reference to the present title, *al-Mustarshid fī al-imāmah*, was also made by Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 266. Najāshī informs us that he received the *Mustarshid*, as well as other works by Ibn Rustam, through Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Nūḥ—al-Ḥasan b. Ḥamzah al-Ṭabarī, who died in 358/968[9].⁴⁰⁸ This *isnād* would seem to confirm that

406. See above, 13.

407. See below, translation, n. 66.

408. See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 48. Aḥmad b. 'Alī b. Nūḥ is mentioned in *Rijāl*, 63, but without a date.

Mustarshid was, in fact, written early in the fourth/tenth century. Ibn al-Nadīm might have seen the work and, perhaps, considered it a work of Ṭabarī, provided he had not read it or had mixed up his notes.⁴⁰⁹

See, further, the discussion of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah*, below.]

[*Fī al-Qirā'āt* "On Qur'ān readings": See *Faṣl*]

[*Al-Qiṭ'ān* "The two sections [of *History*, dealing with the dynasties of the Umayyads and 'Abbāsids]": See *Ta'rīkh*]

Fī al-Qiyās "On analogical reasoning"

This is not a title but a description of the contents of a work on the principle of analogical reasoning which Ṭabarī thought of writing but never did. See *Irshād*, VI, 453, ll. 4–8, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 81, ll. 7–13:

He wanted to produce a book on analogical reasoning but did not do it. Abū al-Qāsim al-Husayn b. Ḥubaysh, the copyist/bookseller (*al-warrāq*), said: Abū Ja'far had asked me to collect for him scholarly works on analogical reasoning, and I collected some thirty books. They remained with him for a short while. As is known, he then discontinued lecturing on traditions, several months before his death. When he returned the books to me, I found red markings he had made in them.⁴¹⁰

Al-Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār "A refutation of the one with the tomes (?)"⁴¹¹

This is the work which Ṭabarī wrote against the founder of the

409. Old uncertainty as to the authenticity of the one or other title ascribed to Ṭabarī will come up in connection with *Ramy*, below.

410. See above, n. 200.

411. *Asfār* here means presumably "books," and not "travels". It is not clear whether this is an allusion to donkeys carrying books (Qur. 62:5), or what else may be behind it, except that it obviously refers to Dāwūd, perhaps, as the author of the many fascicles mentioned(?).

Zāhirite school, Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī (see above, 68 f.). The only circumstantial report available is that preserved in *Irshād*, VI, 450, l. 16–452, l. 11, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 78, l. 1–80, l. 9.⁴¹² It goes back, in part or in its entirety, to Ibn Kāmil:

His book entitled *al-Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār*, his refutation of Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī. The reason why he wrote this book was as follows: Abū Ja'far had been in close contact with Dāwūd b. 'Alī for a while and had written down many of his books. In his inheritance, we found eighty fascicles from his books in his⁴¹³ fine hand. (This material) included the problem debated between Dāwūd b. 'Alī and the Mu'tazilite Abū Mujālid al-Ḍarīr in Wāsiṭ on going out to al-Muwaffaq when there was dissension about the createdness of the Qur'ān.⁴¹⁴

Dāwūd b. 'Alī possessed some knowledge of speculative theology (*naẓar*), traditions, disagreement (among jurists?), and (religious) laws (?, *sunan*) but not very much. He was eloquent and well-spoken and in full control of himself. He had colleagues and students who were strongly inclined to levity and developed a certain approach to employ in discussions (*naẓar*), so as to cut off their adversaries. It sometimes happened that Dāwūd b. 'Alī debated (with someone about) definite proofs for a legal problem. When he saw that (his adversary)⁴¹⁵ was deficient in traditions, he would steer (the discussion) to it. Or, when he would discuss traditions with him, he would steer him to jurisprudence. Or, when he saw that he was (not?) deficient in both (traditions and jurisprudence, he would steer him) to logical disputation (*jadal*).⁴¹⁶ He himself was deficient in grammar and lexicography, even

412. The title is mentioned in Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 5.

413. See above, n. 259. I understand the pronoun to refer to Ṭabarī, here and in connection with "his inheritance."

414. See above, n. 260. "Going out" could be "switching to the side of," but this is hardly meant. Probably, on one of his frequent stays in Wāsiṭ, al-Muwaffaq convoked a disputation on the subject.

415. According to a footnote in Rifā'i's edition, the meaning would be: "saw himself deficient." It seems, however, that Dāwūd was the one who cleverly did the switching to another subject when he noticed that his adversary had a weakness in it.

416. The science of *jadal* is Aristotle's topics.

though he had some acquaintance with these subjects. Abū Ja'far, on the other hand, was well informed in every discipline that came up in a debate. To his dying days, he disliked and refrained from behavior that was unbecoming for scholars. He preferred seriousness under all circumstances.

One day, a problem was discussed by Dāwūd b. 'Alī with Abū Ja'far, and the discussion stopped Dāwūd b. 'Alī (short, so that he was unable to make a retort). His colleagues and students were chagrined, and one of them made acerbic remarks to Abū Ja'far. The latter left the meeting and produced the book under discussion. He made public successive portions of it, amounting eventually to a fragment of about one hundred folios. He started with an invocation (*khuṭbah*), which, however, he did not lecture on (*min ghayr imlā'*). It is among the best and most eloquent of Abū Ja'far's works, containing....⁴¹⁷

After the death of Dāwūd b. 'Alī, he discontinued (working and lecturing on) the subject. Only as much of the work as was written down by his outstanding (*muqaddamūn*) colleagues and students got into the hands of his⁴¹⁸ colleagues and students, and (the material) was not passed on (to others). Among those who wrote down this book were Abū Ishāq b. al-Faḍl b. Ḥayyān al-Ḥulwānī — Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said that we studied (*sami'nāh*) it with him —, Abū al-Tayyib al-Jurjānī, Abū 'Alī al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥusayn al-Ṣawwāf,⁴¹⁹ Abū al-Faḍl al-'Abbās b. Muḥammad (b.?) al-Muḥassin, and others. Al-Ru'āsī, one of Dāwūd b. 'Alī's outstanding colleagues, said that Dāwūd forbade that man who had made the (offensive) remarks to Abū Ja'far to participate in discussions for one year as a punishment for the incident he had caused.

Then, Dāwūd b. 'Alī's son Muḥammad undertook to respond to Abū Ja'far's refutation of his father. He did so in a particularly harsh manner with respect to three problems and took to slandering Abū Ja'far. This was the book of his

417. The text as printed defies grammar and sense and requires correction.

418. Possibly, the pronoun refers to (Abū Bakr b.) Dāwūd b. 'Alī's people, but it seems rather Ṭabarī who is meant.

419. With the exception of al-Ṣawwāf (see above, n. 237), the individuals mentioned still await identification.

addressed to the refutation of Abū Ja'far b. Jarīr.

Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Mughallis⁴²⁰ said: Abū Bakr (Muḥammad) b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī said to me: Abū Ja'far's attack on my father was always on my mind. When I came one day to Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid,⁴²¹ Abū Ja'far was there, and Abū Bakr b. Abī Ḥāmid said to him: This is Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Dāwūd b. 'Alī al-Iṣbahānī. Being aware of my position (in scholarship), Abū Ja'far welcomed me cordially when he saw me. He started to heap praise upon my father and complimented me in a manner that completely disarmed me.

[*Al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* "A refutation of the Ḥurqūṣiyyah"]

This title was brought to the attention of scholars by L. Massignon in a particularly impenetrable footnote of his immortal *Passion*.⁴²² Massignon's source appears to have been *Tabṣīrat al-'awāmm* of Abū Turāb Murtaḍā b. al-Dā'ī,⁴²³ which unfortunately has remained inaccessible to me. Without further specifying his sources, Massignon assumed that Ḥurqūṣiyyah referred to a certain tribal group, Zuhayr b. Ḥurqūṣ, as ancestors of Ibn Ḥanbal. According to Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, n. 2, the prominent early Khārijite Ḥurqūṣ b. Zuhayr⁴²⁴ might be meant. Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, furthered the discussion by adducing Najāshī, *Rijāl*.⁴²⁵ There, it is stated expressly that a non-Shī'ah ('āmmī) Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī was the author of *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah*, in which he mentioned the recensions (of the reports) on the Day of the Pool (= Ghadīr Khumm). Al-Najāshī's authorities were Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. Makhlad (al-Bāqarjī) — his father (Makhlad b. Ja'far). Both belonged, it seems, to Ṭabarī's circle (see above, n. 252). Thus, the work could indeed have been by Ṭabarī. It may, however, be noted that Makhlad became "confused" in his later years. His son persuaded him to claim (being

420. See above, n. 199.

421. Unidentified.

422. See Massignon, *Passion*², III, 154, n. 5, English trans., III, 142 n. 140.

423. See Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 711.

424. See *El*², III, 582 f., s. v.

425. See Najāshī, *Rijāl*, 225 (= 246 in the later edition cited by Sezgin, I, 328, n.2).

an authorized transmitter of?) a number of works, among them Ṭabarī's *History*, while, in reality, he just relied upon purchased copies. This casts doubt also on his reliability with respect to *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* but not sufficiently so as to justify rejecting the attribution to Ṭabarī out of hand.

The connection with Ghadīr Khumm suggests that Ḥurqūṣiyyah could have served as a nickname for Abū Bakr b. Abī Dāwūd al-Sijistānī (above, nn. 229 and, especially, 326), but no evidence for this assumption is available. For the time being, it is not implausible to suggest that *al-Radd 'alā al-Ḥurqūṣiyyah* was part of *Faḍā'il*.]

Fī al-Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam 'alā Mālik "A refutation of Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's statement on certain views of Mālik"⁴²⁶

Irshād, VI, 453, ll. 2 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 55, ll. 3–5, lists this title (which, however, was not a real title), adding that the work "did not reach his students and colleagues." *Irshād*, VI, 434, ll. 1–4, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 55, ll. 1–4, explains further, apparently relying on Ibn Kāmil:

We have heard that he was asked in al-Fuṣṭāṭ to refute Mālik on some point, and he did so in connection with something that Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam had discussed. (Ṭabarī's) work has not come into our hands. Perhaps it was one of the things that the adversaries (*al-khuṣūm*) prevented from being circulated (*nashr*).

It is not quite clear who the "adversaries" were and why there was opposition to the work. The Mālikites may have objected to it, even though Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam would not have attacked Mālik in an unseemly manner, and Ṭabarī himself is unlikely to have attacked Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam (but may have been critical of Mālik).⁴²⁷

Since the work originated during Ṭabarī's stay in Egypt and presumably was made public at the time, it can claim to be his earliest publication of which we have notice, seeing that the earliest publication dates of *Laṭīf* and *Ikhtilāf* cannot be

426. The member of the Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam family meant here is no doubt Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh (above, n. 104).

427. The Ḥanbalites are certainly not meant in this context.

precisely established.

[*Al-Ramy bi-al-nushshāb* "On arrow shooting"]

Irshād, VI, 453, ll. 8–11, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 81, ll. 14–18, declared the work to be supposititious:

ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad said: A small book on arrow shooting has come into my possession. I know of nobody who studied it with him, nor of anybody to record and confirm his authorship or attribute it to him. I am afraid that it is wrongly ascribed to him.

If it was a legal treatise, Ṭabarī might have been the author, since the subject of shooting was of great concern to jurists.⁴²⁸ However, Ṭabarī's biographer ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Muḥammad knew the contents of the work, and we do not. Thus, we ought to accept his opinion. If it was a technical treatise on archery, Ṭabarī's authorship is indeed most unlikely. The assumption of a confusion with *Kitāb al-Wāḍiḥ fī al-ramy bi-al-nushshāb* by a certain ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarī seems farfetched, even if this author did not live in the seventh/thirteenth century but in or before the historian's time.⁴²⁹

[*Ṣalāt al-khawf* "The prayer of fear": See *Basīṭ*]

Ṣarīḥ al-sunnah "The essence of orthodox Muslim belief"

The work was also known as Ṭabarī's "Creed" (*al-ʿAqīdah*, see above, 85) and, it seems mistakenly, as *Sharḥ al-sunnah* "Explanation of..." Ibn ʿAsākir, LXXXII, refers to it as "a slender (*laṭīf*) book, in which Ṭabarī explained his (theological) views (*madh-habahū*) and religious theory and practice in the service of God

428. Among others, Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam wrote a book on (horse) racing and shooting; see Ibn Farḥūn, *Dibāj*, 232. Ṭabarī himself paid attention to the prowess in archery of some early Muslims; see *Dhayl*, III, 2301, 2312, 2362, ed. Cairo, XI, 497, 506, 543.

429. See Brockelmann, *GAL*², I, 149, no. 8, Suppl. I, 906. The work is preserved in a number of manuscripts. It was quoted extensively by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Furūsiyyah*, 110 ff.; its authorities, as quoted in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, cannot easily be identified for dating purposes.

[*wa-mā yadīnu Allāha bihī*]."⁴³⁰ *Irshād*, VI, 452, ll. 14–16, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 80, ll. 13–15, echoes this description with only slight differences: "Also, his treatise known as *Kitāb Ṣariḥ al-sunnah* in several folios. He mentioned in it his (theological) views, religious theory and practice, and beliefs."

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, Suppl. I, 218, no. 6, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, nos. 6 and 8. *Ṣariḥ* was edited on the basis of an Istanbul manuscript and translated by D. Sourdel (see Bibliography, under *Ṣariḥ*).

[*Al-Ṣalāh* "On prayer": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Sariqah* "On theft": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Sharḥ al-sunnah* "An explanation of orthodox Muslim belief": See *Ṣariḥ*]

[*Al-Shudhūr* is a title listed by Ḥājji Khalifah, ed. Yalṭkaya, 1429, who ascribed it to the historian whom he calls a Ḥanbalite (!), no doubt a meaningless misattribution]

[*Al-Shurb* "On drink": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Shurūṭ* "On document forms": See *Basīṭ* and *Laṭīf* (above, n. 396)]

Tabṣīr ulī al-nuhā wa-maʿālim al-hudā "An instruction for the intelligent and directions toward right guidance"

This is the title as it appears in the Escorial manuscript, 1514, fols. 81a–104b. Elsewhere, it is plain *Tabṣīr*, at times enlarged with *fī uṣūl al-dīn* or *fī maʿālim al-dīn*.

Ibn ʿAsākir, LXXX, quotes al-Farghānī:

430. "Allāha" also appears in the manuscript used for the edition of *Ṣariḥ*, text, 199, n. 1. *Irshād* may have omitted it for simplification. Note further that Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 274, l. 4, reads *Sharḥ al-sunnah* following Ibn ʿAsākir. Ṣafadī, *Wāfi*, II, 286, l. 6, has *Ṣariḥ al-sunnah*.

Also completed is his book entitled *al-Tabṣīr*, a treatise (*risālah*) addressed to the inhabitants of Āmul in Ṭabaristān. He comments in it on the principles of the religion of Islam (*uṣūl al-dīn*), which he has been following (*yataqallad*).⁴³¹

Irshād, VI, 452, ll. 10–14, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 80, ll. 10–13, shows an obviously incorrect *al-Baṣīr*:

Among Abū Jaʿfar's writings is his treatise entitled *al-Baṣīr fī maʿālim al-dīn* addressed to the people of Ṭabaristān concerning the disagreement that had arisen among them on (matters such as the identity or non-identity of) name and thing named (*al-ism wa-al-musammā*)⁴³² and the doctrines (*madhāhib*) of innovators.⁴³³ It is about thirty folios.

The work is partly preserved in the mentioned Escorial manuscript;⁴³⁴ see Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, no. 2, Suppl. I, 218, no. 5, and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 328, no. 5. Attention was first drawn to it in 1901 by Becker, "Ṭabarī's sogenannte Catechesis Mahometana." In the introduction, Ṭabarī says that the people of Ṭabaristān had asked him to write such a treatise because of the large number of confusing, sectarian, and divisive views that were causing trouble among them.

Without indicating a title, Ibn Ḥazm quotes *Tabṣīr*, fol. 85b, for

431. *Yataqallad* is doing the opposite of what innovators do. Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 273, ll. 14 f., has a shortened version of Ibn ʿAsākir. Both Ṣafadī, *Wafī*, II, 286, l. 7, and Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, III, 121, l. 11, list the title of the work as *Kitāb al-Tabṣīr fī uṣūl al-dīn*.

432. This intensively discussed problem of speculative theology was considered a sort of touchstone showing whether religious scholars had the correct attitude. They were strongly warned against paying attention to it. Ṭabarī's Egyptian authority Yūnus b. ʿAbd al-Aʿlā, for instance, is supposed to have said: "I heard al-Shāfiʿī say: When you hear someone say that the name is different from the thing named or the name is identical with the thing named, testify against him (and say) that he is a Mutakallim and has no religion" See Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, II, 174. Ṭabarī himself refers to the *ism-musammā* problem in the introduction of *Tabṣīr* (fol. 82b) among the abominable indications of unbelief current at the time in Ṭabaristān. See also *Ṣarīḥ*, text, 198, trans., 192.

433. The "innovators" were mainly the speculative theologians, the Qadariyyah/Jahmiyyah. Their scandalous heretical views were gaining the upper hand in the region, which also suffered under the dominance of incompetent troublemakers (*taraʿus al-ruwaybiḍāh*, "dregs of the population" [see trans., Vol. XXXII, 55, n. 177], an allusion to the Shīʿite sectarian rulers?), see *Tabṣīr*, fol. 82b.

434. I wish to thank the authorities of the Biblioteca de El Escorial for providing me with a microfilm of the work.

the need of Muslims at an early age to know about names and attributes in order to avoid being branded as unbelievers.⁴³⁵

Dhahabī, *Nubalā*, XIV, 279, l. 6–280, l. 4, and 'Uluww, 150 f., has a somewhat shortened and mangled quotation from the chapter on divine attributes known through statements of the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*. It appears on fol. 87b of the Escorial manuscript.

[*Al-Tafsīr* "Qur'ān commentary": See *Jāmi' al-bayān*]

[*Al-Ṭahārah* "On ritual purity ": See *Basīṭ*]

Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-taḥṣīl ma'ānī al-thābit 'an Rasūl Allāh min al-akhbār "An improved treatment and detailed discussion of the traditions established as going back to the Messenger of God"

Ṭabarī's most ambitious work on traditions is more commonly referred to as *Tahdhīb al-āthār* or, simply, *al-Tahdhīb*.⁴³⁶ It is mentioned by all Ṭabarī biographers. It remained unfinished but apparently began to circulate rather early in Ṭabarī's career. The fact that *Laṭīf* is quoted in it does not help very much to fix the time of the first appearance of parts of it.⁴³⁷ *Tahdhīb* was possibly meant to rival Ibn Ḥanbal's *Musnad*. In fact, though, it was much more than a mere collection of traditions. Its singular conception was to provide an exhaustive and penetrating analysis of the philological and legal implications of each *ḥadīth* mentioned and to discuss its meaning as well as its significance for religious practice and theory. Thus, it contains what amounts to monographs on a number of important topics.

Al-Farghānī's *ijāzah* as quoted in *Irshād*, VI, 426, l. 20–427, l. 1, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 45, ll. 2 f., mentions that he studied the Prophetical traditions transmitted (*musnad*) by the Ten⁴³⁸ and by Ibn 'Abbās down to the traditions on the Prophet's heavenly journey (*mi'rāj*) from the *Kitāb al-Tahdhīb*.

It was presumably Ibn Kāmil who used the long title of the

435. See Ibn Ḥazm, *Fisal*, IV, 35, as mentioned by van Ess, *Erkenntnislehre*, 49.

436. See also above, *al-Musnad al-mukharraj*.

437. See above, 117.

438. For the Blessed Ten, the ten old Muslims who were assured of Paradise, see *El*², I, 693, s. v. *al-'ashara al-mubashshara*.

work. According to *Irshād*, VI, 448, ll. 12–18, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 74, l. 17–75, l. 6, he said:

Kitāb Tahdhīb al-āthār wa-tafṣīl al-thābit ʿan Rasūl Allāh min al-akhbār. It is a work, the like of which it would be difficult for any other scholar to produce and complete. Abū Bakr b. Kāmil said: After Abū Jaʿfar's death, I have not seen anyone who possessed more religious knowledge, knew more about the works of religious scholars and the disagreements of jurists, and had a greater command of all scholarly disciplines. (I know) because I tried hard to produce a work on the Prophetical traditions transmitted (*musnad*) by ʿAbd-allāh b. Masʿūd in the way Abū Jaʿfar had done (with the *musnads*) of others. I was unable to do a good job, and it did not come out right.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 235, ll. 4 f., states his intention to mention the published parts of the unfinished *Tahdhīb*, but the text contains a blank space.

TB, II, 163, ll. 10 f., called Ṭabari's unfinished work entitled *Tahdhīb al-āthār* unequalled in the treatment of its subject, as far as he knew. His remark was quoted by nearly all later biographers.⁴³⁹

Ibn ʿAsākir, LXXX f., quotes al-Farghānī at length to bring out the importance of the work:

He started on the composition of *Tahdhīb al-āthār*. It is one of his most remarkable works. He began with the traditions of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq that in his opinion⁴⁴⁰ were transmitted with sound chains of transmitters. He discussed each one of them with their weaknesses (*ʿilal*),⁴⁴¹ their recensions, and their contents as to law, the practice of the Prophet

439. For instance, Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, IX, 41; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, VI, 171; *Irshād*, VI, 424, l. 12, ed. Rifāʿī, XVIII, 41, ll. 14 f.; Safadī, *Wāfi*, II, 285; Ibn al-Jazarī, *Ghāya*, II, 107; Dhahabī, *Nubalāʾ*, XIV, 270, ll. 1 f.; Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, III, 22, ll. 9 f.; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, XI, 145; Ibn Taghribirdī, *Nujūm*, III, 205, ll. 13 f.

440. Read *ʿindahū*, as in the quotation from Ibn ʿAsākir in Subkī, *Tabaqāt*, III, 121, ll. 12–16.

441. As understood in *Tahdhīb*, *ʿilal* are the illnesses, affecting practically exclusively the chains of transmitters, which are potential reasons for considering a given tradition as "sick (*saqīm*)."

(*sunan*), and the disagreements and arguments of scholars. (He also discussed) their contents with respect to meanings (*ma'ānī*) and their rare words, and (he reported) the attacks of heretics on them and refuted them and explained the corruptness of their attacks. He made public of the work the Prophetical traditions transmitted by the Blessed Ten, the people of the House, and the *mawlās* as well as a large fragment of Prophetical traditions transmitted by Ibn 'Abbās. It was his intention to report every last sound tradition of the Messenger of God and discuss them all in the way he had started, so that nobody would ever be able to attack any part of the knowledge of the Messenger of God. He also intended to report all that is needed by religious scholars, as he had done in *Tafsīr*. Thus, (if he had been able to complete the work), he would have dealt with the (entire) science of the religious law (*al-sharī'ah*) on the basis of the Qur'ān and the traditions and practice of the Prophet (*sunan*). He died before the completion of the work. Thereafter, there was nobody to interpret and discuss a single one of those traditions the way he had done.

After repeating most of this information, Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, ll. 15–20, expressed what appears to be his personal opinion: "If the work had been completed as planned, it would have to come to a hundred volumes." This, of course, was an offhand guess, but it is hardly an exaggeration.

See Brockelmann, *GAL*, I, 143, Suppl. I, 217 f., and Sezgin, *GAS*, I, 327. The preserved fragments of the *Musnads* of 'Alī and 'Abd-allāh b. al-'Abbās were published in three volumes in 1982 by Maḥmūd M. Shākir. The *Musnad* of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb remains to be published.

Al-Ta'riḫ "The History"

Because of its fame, the work was commonly referred to simply as Ṭabarī's *History*. Its most authentic title is the one indicated by Ṭabarī himself in the colophon of one of the manuscripts. It is *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk wa-al-khulafā'* "The

short work on the history of messengers, kings, and caliphs."⁴⁴² Similarly, Ṭabarī refers to it as *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*.⁴⁴³ It seems that Ṭabarī had a predilection for "short work" as an expression of modesty and an indication that a subject required a much longer treatment than the one it was receiving from him.

We also find titles such as "History of the messengers, prophets, kings, and caliphs" (al-Farghānī) or "History of nations and kings" (TB), as well as "History of the messengers and kings" expanded to "and their historical record and all those who lived in the time of each one of them" (Ibn Kāmil).⁴⁴⁴ Scribes who copied the work for a patron presumably often preferred some impressive title to put on the title page, but the simple *Ta'riḫ* really needed no amplification. There could never be any doubt as to which work was meant.

According to *Irshād*, VI, 427, ll. 17 f., ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 44, ll. 16–18, al-Farghānī referred in his *ijāzah* to:

Kitāb al-Rusul wa-al-anbiyā' wa-al-mulūk wa-al-khulafā'
and the two sections (*al-qiṭ'ān*, on the Umayyads and
'Abbāsids) of the work. However, I did not study it (with
Ṭabarī directly) but used it by (written) permission (*ijāzah*).

Ibn Kāmil's full and perceptive description of the work appears in *Irshād*, VI, 443, l. 17–445, l. 6, ed. Rifā'i, XVIII, 68, l. 6–70, l. 9:

Among his works is his great *History* entitled *Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa-al-mulūk wa-akhbāruhum wa-man kān fī zaman kull wāḥid minhum*. He began with an invocation (*khuṭbah*) that (briefly) summarizes the significant aspects of its contents (*ma'ānī*).⁴⁴⁵ He then discussed what time is and the du-

442. See translation below, Vol. XXXVIII, p. xvii.

443. See *Dhayl*, III, 2358, ed. Cairo, XI, 540.

444. A rather similar title appears in a Leiden manuscript and seemed to Kosegarten, the first editor of large portions of *History*, who used a Berlin manuscript, to be the authoritative title of the work: *Ta'riḫ al-mulūk wa-akhbāruhum* (Kosegarten: *a'māruhum*!) *wa-mawālīd* (K. *wa-mawālīd*) *al-rusul wa-anbā'u* *um wa-al-kā'in alladhī* (K. *deest*) *kān fī zaman kull wāḥid minhum*. See Hamaker, *Specimen*, 19, and Kosegarten, I, IV and 3.

445. See above, n. 336. The general accuracy of Ibn Kāmil's analysis of the con-

ration in time (of the world) according to the divergent opinions of the Companions and others and the nations opposed to our view on the subject. A chapter like this can be found only in his work.⁴⁴⁶

Abū al-Ḥasan 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. al-Mughallis, the jurist,⁴⁴⁷ said: Of all the scholars we have ever seen, he possessed the best understanding and had the greatest concern for knowledge and research. Because of his concern with scholarly research, he had his books all laid out on one side of his residence,⁴⁴⁸ then went through them for the first (time) one by one, in the process carrying them to the other side, until he was through with them; then he studied them again and returned them to their original place.⁴⁴⁹ (Ibn al-Mughallis) said one day: Nobody has ever done what Abū Ja'far did with respect to writing and giving a full presentation of history (*ta'rikh al-zamān*). (Ibn Kāmil) continued: Abū al-Ḥasan b. al-Mughallis said to me one day while we were talking about scholarship and the excellence of scholars: By God! I do think that Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī forgot as much of what he knew by heart till his death as so-and-so—naming an important scholar—ever knew by heart all his life.

Abū Ja'far continued in *History* with the discussion of the creation of time as days and nights and (argued) that God alone created them. He mentioned the first (thing) that was created, namely, the Pen, as well as everything (created) thereafter one by one according to the traditions (*āthār*) on the subject and the different opinions of scholars about it. He then mentioned Adam and Eve and the accursed Iblīs as well as Adam's descent (fall to earth). He continued with brief histories of each prophet, messenger, and king, down to

tents of *History* can easily be verified by the reader of this translation.

446. The correct wording of the text cannot easily be established, but there is no doubt about its meaning.

447. On Ibn Mughallis, see above, n. 199. Although this paragraph refers to *History* only in the second of its three statements, it is obvious that all of it goes back to Ibn Kāmil and, presumably, his Ṭabarī bibliography.

448. Ed. Rifā'i suggests to read *ḥā'ir* with the putative meaning of "quiet (corner)," but this seems dubious. *Hāratihī* in the text may have its ordinary meaning of "residential quarter of a town" (and hence, residence?).

449. See above, n. 199.

(the time of) our Prophet, including also the history of minor successor kings (*mulūk al-ṭawā'if*) and the kings of the Persians and the Rūm. He then mentioned the birth of the Messenger of God, his genealogy, his male and female ancestors, his children, his wives, (the origin of) his Prophetic mission, his raids and expeditions, and the situation of his Companions. Then he mentioned the rightly guided caliphs after (the Prophet's death). He continued with the history of the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids in two sections, one devoted to the Umayyads, and the other to the 'Abbāsids, with the historical comments he made in *History* (*wa-mā sharahahū fī Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh*). This (portion of *History*) was made public by way of *ijāzah* down to the year 294/906[7]. He did not continue with the subsequent years, because the reign of al-Muqtadir (which extended throughout Ṭabarī's remaining years) fell into them. He had been asked to comment on the two sections (dealing with the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids), and he complied and called (this portion of *History*) the "two sections (*at-qit'ān*)."

This work is of unique excellence and distinction in the world. It brings together many religious and worldly disciplines. It is about five thousand folios.

Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 234, l. 24–235, l. 2, adds information on continuations of *History* and ends with a remarkable statement on the necessary qualifications for writing history:

Kitāb al-Ta'rīkh, with the two sections (on the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids). He finished dictating it in 302/915 and stopped there.

A number of people have abridged the work and omitted the *isnāds*, among them a man known as Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Hāshimī,⁴⁵⁰ and another one, a secretary known as.... Among Mosulites, Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Shimshāṭī al-Mu'allim⁴⁵¹ and a man known as al-Salīl b. Aḥmad.⁴⁵² A

450. Unidentified.

451. Possibly, Abū al-Hasan 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-'Adawī al-Shimshāṭī, a teacher of Nāṣir al-dawlah's son Abū Taghlib? See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 154, ll. 22–28, and the index of Dodge's translation, II, 1099 f.

452. Possibly, the informant of the Ibn Jinnī mentioned in Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, II,

number of people have made additions covering the period from where it ends to our time. Their additions are not reliable, because (the men who wrote them) were not connected with the government (*dawlah*), nor did they have knowledge.⁴⁵³

Since the work was so well known, many biographers felt no need to say much about it. *TB*, II, 163, l. 9, merely mentions Ṭabarī's famous work, *Ta'riḫ al-umam wa-al-mulūk*. As in the case of *Tahdhīb*, *TB* was quoted by most later biographers. This was also the title cited by Ḥājji Khalifah, ed. Yaltkaya, I, 297, and from there, it became known in seventeenth-century Europe through d'Herbelot, *Bibliothèque*, 866b, s. v. *Tarikh AlThabari*; see below, 138 f.

Ibn 'Asākir, LXXIX, used as usual by Dhahabī, *Nubalā'*, XIV, 273, l. 8, merely mentions as completed his "*Ta'riḫ* that extends down to Ṭabarī's own age." And Qiftī, *Inbāh*, III, 89, l. 6, described the *Kitāb al-Ta'riḫ* as the greatest work in its field. In another work, al-Qiftī has a passage on the continuators of Ṭabarī. It was inserted in his biography of Thābit b. Sinān and was, perhaps, derived from al-Qiftī's monograph on Ṭabarī.⁴⁵⁴

More information on *History* will be found in the following pages and, of course, in all the volumes of this translation.

[*Ta'riḫ al-rijāl* "The history of personalities": See *Dhayl*]

[*Tartīb al-'ulamā'* "The classification of scholars": See *Ādāb al-nufūs* and *Basīṭ*]

[*Ummahāt al-awlād* "On slave girls giving birth to children by their masters": See *Laṭīf*]

[*Al-Waṣāyā* "On last wills": See *Basīṭ*]

[*Al-Zakāh* "On charity taxes": See *Basīṭ*]

490, l. 3, as suggested in the index of Dodge's translation of *Fihrist*.

453. In other words, they were neither government officials nor scholars (of religion and law) and thus had no access to important historical information and no understanding of the processes of history. See also below, n. 455.

454. See Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 81-83.

The *History* and Its English Translation

The History in Islam and the West

The preceding long list of Ṭabarī's writings contains very few titles devoted predominantly to historical or biographical research, and a perusal of the biographical sketch presented here makes it quite clear that the outward course of his life was comparatively little influenced by his occupation with history. These are incontrovertible facts. Even the availability of more bibliographical information than we have is unlikely to refute them. Ṭabarī's importance as a scholar in his time and his role as a participant in contemporary affairs were the result of his scholarly activities in the legal and religious sphere. Yet, the outstanding significance of *History* was realized while he was still alive. It was welcomed by the students who heard Ṭabarī lecture on it or received his *ijāzah* to study and transmit it. They went on to use it in their own works, as was done, for instance, by the author of *Aghānī* (see above, n. 127). Its uniqueness was praised by a contemporary such as Ibn al-Mughallis (see above, p. 132). A writer on world history writing in a rather different tradition, al-Mas'ūdī, was acquainted with Ṭabarī as an important historian. About a generation after Ṭabarī's death, he spoke of *History* as "a work superior to all other historical works because of the abundant information it contains" and declared it "an extremely useful work," for, he reasoned, Ṭabarī's position as the leading jurist and religious scholar of his time made it possible for him to know all there was to know about history.⁴⁵⁵

455. See Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, I, 15 f., ed. Pellat, I, 15; Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 508. For government experience as a necessity for the historian, see

Ṭabarī became known primarily by his *History*. It was, as M. J. de Goeje put it, the great work "whose fame has never faded from his own day to ours."⁴⁵⁶ His biographers would, of course, not fail to praise his other accomplishments, and they mention those in the field of history as merely one aspect of his work and not the first and foremost;⁴⁵⁷ but for Muslims, he was the historian of Islam. When it was necessary to distinguish him from other Ṭabarīs, it was as Ṭabarī the historian.

As was already suggested by O. Loth,⁴⁵⁸ the explanation for this development is not far to seek. Ṭabarī's works on jurisprudence and *ḥadīth* continued to be admired, and his Qur'ānic scholarship set an enduring and always respected standard of excellence. Yet, works on law and religion always were at the center of an enormous literary activity, and no matter how traditional much of it was or seemed to be, new tendencies and concerns constantly left their changing imprint on them. *History*, on the other hand, was, in accordance with the basic character of Muslim historiography, never really superseded. It remained the unique source for the period it covered, even when other sources for it were still available. Later historians constantly used Ṭabarī's work, at first directly, but then, in the course of time, usually indirectly through other histories such as the one of Ibn al-Athīr. The new works offered much of Ṭabarī's information in a shortened form and, naturally, added much subsequent history. Thus, they were easier to handle and had the advantage of being of greater interest for the ma-

above, n. 453. Al-Mas'ūdī's relationship with Ṭabarī is problematic. He once mentioned Ṭabarī as his oral authority (Mas'ūdī, *Tanbih*, 267). Thus, it would seem that he knew him personally(?). See also Khalidī, *Islamic Historiography*, 148. Murūj (IV, 145, ed. Pellat, II, 145) expressly refers to *History* and elsewhere mentions Ṭabarī as a source of historical information (Murūj, V, 8, 40, ed. Pellat, II, 184, 202). None of the references can, however, be traced to *History*. Could al-Mas'ūdī have quoted from memory what he had heard long ago in Ṭabarī's lectures?

456. See de Goeje in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XXIII, 3b (Edinburgh, 1888). I owe this reference to Muth's work.

457. *Irshād*, VI, 423, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 40, introduces Ṭabarī as "a *ḥadīth* scholar, jurist, Qur'ān reader, and historian" (in this order). Dhahabī, *Ibar*, II, 146, mentions *Tafsīr* first, and then *Ta'rikh*. On the other hand, Qiftī, *Muḥammadūn*, 263 f., speaks of "the author of the famous *History* and *Tafsīr*." Of course, not much can be made of this.

458. See Loth, "Ṭabarī's Korancommentar," 590. Loth says that (in contrast to *Tafsīr*), *History* had no competitors. This, however, rather oversimplifies the situation.

jority of readers who wanted to learn about events close to their own times. Some, if not many, later historians continued to use Ṭabarī and even seek out earlier sources, but manuscripts became increasingly difficult to find. Ibn Khaldūn copied a document at first from Ibn al-Athīr and was only later able to collate the text as it appears in Ṭabarī.⁴⁵⁹ This was more like the exception that confirmed the general rule. Ṭabarī always remained the historian of Islam, but his original work receded from general view.

Early translations into Persian and Turkish languages further attest to the fame of *History*. They show, however, a similar tendency toward adaptations of the original text. According to our philological understanding of the term, they could hardly be called translations. A Turkish translation, incidentally, was published already in 1844 and served as a source for some studies by contemporary Western scholars.

The history of the European acquaintance with Ṭabarī's *History* in a way constituted a reversal of the chronological process. The Arabic and Muslim works which attracted the curiosity of early Orientalists were generally those of more recent dates and, in particular, those of current use in the Near East. The historians whose works were introduced in seventeenth-century Europe, such as the histories of al-Makīn and Abū al-Fidā', were acquainted with Ṭabarī's work as a rule only at second or third hand.⁴⁶⁰ Only later did the search for the original text start. It was a slow process, and it began in earnest only at the end of the eighteenth century. After the publication of the Leiden edition in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the stage was reached where the later excerptors and adapters of Ṭabarī in Arabic as well as Persian and Turkish were disregarded by modern historians, except, of course, for whatever information not found in Ṭabarī they were able to contribute.

The name of Ṭabarī the historian had, however, been long familiar in the West. B. d'Herbelot (1625–95), whose *Bibliothèque Orientale* was published posthumously in 1697, featured a substantial article on "Thabari" (*Bibliothèque*, 1014). He started out by describing him as "the most famous of all Ṭabarīs on account

459. See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimah*, II, 139, n. 751.

460. For instance, L. Marracci knew *History* through al-Makīn. See Nallino, "Le fonti arabe," II, 96, n. 1. Marracci did not know *Tafsīr*, of course.

of the general *History* from the creation of the world to the time in which he lived that was published by him." The special article he devoted to *History* (*Bibliothèque*, 866 f.) gives as good a summary of the work's history as could be found in the West until more than a century had passed. It deserves to be quoted here in full on account of its historical interest. Practically all of its contents was derived by d'Herbelot from the great bibliographical work of Hājji Khalifah (1609–57), whose lifetime overlapped with his own.⁴⁶¹

TARIKH AlThabari. C'est le titre d'une Histoire fort célèbre, qui passe pour le fondement des autres Histoires Musulmannes. Elle a été composée par Abou Giafar Mohammed Ben Gioraïr, natif du Thabarestan, qui mourut l'an 310. de l'hégire. Elle commence à la Creation du Monde, & finit en l'an 300.⁴⁶² de l'hégire. Elle porte encore le titre particulier de ,Tarikh alomam v almoulouk. Elle est aussi souvent citée sous le titre de ,Tarikh Giafari, & les Persans la nomment aussi ,Tarikh pesser Gioraïr, l'Histoire du fils de Gioraïr.

Ebn AlGiouzi écrit, que cette Histoire dans son Original contient plusieurs volumes, & que l'Edition que nous avons entre les mains n'en est qu'un Abbregé, & Ebn AlSobki rapporte dans ses Thabacat, que Thabari ayant demandé à ses amis, s'ils prendroient plaisir à lire une Histoire de tous ce qui étoit arrivé dans le Monde jusqu'à son temps, ils luy répondirent, qu'ils la liroient volontiers s'il étoit possible de la trouver, & que cet Auteur leur ayant dit, qu'il avoit compilé trente mille feüilles sur cette matière, ses amis luy repliquèrent, que tout le temps de leur vie ne suffiroit pas pour les lire. Sur cecy, Thabari leur dit, qu'il l'abregeroit autant qu'il pourroit, & c'est cet Abbregé, dit ,Sobki, qui nous est resté entre les mains.

Cet Abbregé a été traduit en Langue Persienne par Abou Al'i Mohammed Aliâli,⁴⁶³ Vizir des Sultans Samanides, du

461. D'Herbelot used Galland's manuscript of Hājji Khalifah. See Laurens, *Barthélemi d'Herbelot*, 17. For his indirect use of Ṭabarī, see Laurens, 58. Hājji Khalifah's lengthiest Ṭabarī entry is in connection with *History*; that on *Tafsīr* is much briefer. See Hājji Khalifah, ed. Yaltkaya, 297 f.

462. Hājji Khalifah has 309 (for the latter date, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv).

463. I. c., a misreading of al-Bal'amī.

temps de Mansour Ben Nouh, l'an 352. de l'hegire.

Cette même Histoire a été traduite en Langue Turquesque par un Auteur incertain, & c'est celle que l'on trouve communément entre les mains des Turcs.

Abou Mohammed A'bdallah Ben Mohammed AlFargani a fait la continuation de l'Histoire de Thabari, & l'a publiée sous le titre de *Selat*.

Abou Hassan Mohammed Ben A'bdalmalek AlHama-dhani, mort l'an 521. de l'hegire, y a fait un autre Supple-ment.

In the nineteenth-century West, "history" was about to replace "philosophy" as the fundamental culture symbol of the age. With it came a long period of the avid study of everything that could be understood as "history." The occupation with Ṭabarī's historical work gained in intensity, as is chronicled in F.-C. Muth's very useful survey of Ṭabarī's *History* as mirrored in European scholarship published in 1983. Ṭabarī's other works meanwhile continued to be all but unknown to Western scholars. It was only near the end of the century that O. Loth called attention to *Tafsīr*, when a manuscript of the work had become known (see above, n. 383).

Not surprisingly, if quite inaccurately, Ṭabarī was described—shades of Herodotus!—as "Vater der arabischen Geschichte" by A. D. Mordtmann, who in 1848, relying on the recently published Turkish translation, collected *History*'s information on Ṭabaristān (see Bibliography, below, under Mordtmann). After the publication of the Leiden edition, the interest of scholars soon turned to the challenging task of disentangling the source situation in the original text of *History*. This was a promising undertaking, owing to the fact that Ṭabarī himself, in his way, was careful to hint at the sources employed by him throughout his work. The name of J. Wellhausen should be mentioned here as that of the highly regarded pioneer in this field (see above, n. 206). The work has been continued with a good measure of success, but much more remains to be done.

It was, and has remained, more difficult to gain an insight into the manner in which Ṭabarī used his sources. In other words, what was his approach to the writing of history and his view of history in general and the historical data he surveyed in his work? What

considerations determined his choice of a given source in preference to other sources that might have been available to him? What, if anything, did he omit, thereby altering trends and historical interpretation, be it consciously or unconsciously? Beyond a general Baghdad-centrism that was indicated by his own residence in the capital and by the audience for which he was writing, what were his views on historical events and personalities? We hear, for example, that he predicted the failure of Ibn al-Mu'tazz's revolt as soon as it happened. When he was informed about it, he inquired about the new wazir and chief judge. Hearing their names, he expressed the view that the choice of such accomplished men who were ahead of their times in a period of general retrogression was wrong and Ibn al-Mu'tazz would not last.⁴⁶⁴ If this is the correct understanding of the reported remark, he seems to have meant that the course of historical events depended upon prevailing trends and the government must conform to the trends of the times in order to master them. Such express statements are rare in Ṭabarī's case. They are also often, as in the given example, of dubious historicity. The answers to the questions raised must be sought by means of internal evidence.

The present translation has as one of its purposes that of furthering this discussion. Whatever might come of it, the fact remains that Ṭabarī's *History* is our greatest single source of information for much of the early centuries of Muslim history. The existence of a standard work of this kind is apt to exercise a certain restrictive influence and to promote the tendency to rely on it unduly. Such was arguably the case with Ṭabarī's *History* for quite some time. It hardly is any longer. His *History* is now ready to take its proper place in Muslim historiography—not at the head, but at the very center.

464. The report goes back to al-Mu'āfā, with a suspiciously vague *isnād* connecting it to Ṭabarī. See Mu'āfā, *Jalis*, I, 472, quoted in *TB*, X, 98 f. (above, n. 18). The name of the chief judge is al-Ḥasan b. al-Muthannā, he must be the same individual as Abū al-Muthannā Aḥmad b. Ya'qūb, mentioned below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, 189–91. It may be noted that Ṭabarī figures among the transmitters of the story of 'Ā'ishah that promotes the idea of a steady deterioration in history; see Rosenthal, "Sweeter than Hope," 25.

The Text

Scholars interested in the history of libraries in Islam usually cite the Egyptian historians al-Musabbiḥī and Ibn Abī Ṭayyī', who lived, respectively, around the turn of the fourth/tenth and sixth/twelfth centuries. Brief remarks from the works of these historians illustrate the large size of Muslim libraries in general as well as, in particular, the high esteem in which Ṭabarī's *History* was held. According to al-Musabbiḥī, the Fāṭimid caliph al-'Azīz, who reigned from 975 to 996, spent one hundred dinārs for a copy of *History* that was offered to him. He then found out that his library already contained more than twenty copies of the work, including one in Ṭabarī's own hand. According to Ibn Abī Ṭayyī', 1,220 copies of *History* were in the library of the Fāṭimid palace complex when Saladin took over in 567/1171.⁴⁶⁵ We are not told whether these were complete sets or individual volumes. Whatever it was, the figure of 1,220 seems to be a somewhat exaggerated guess. It is, however, quite possible that an autograph of Ṭabarī found its way into the possession of royal bibliophiles and that the Fāṭimid rulers, conscious of their position in history, collected as many volumes as they could of a work that reflected the past glory of Islam to which they themselves aspired in vain. At a much later date, the Ottoman sultans had the same abundant means and the same motivation for acquiring choice copies of *History*. It is thus not by chance that today, the best of the preserved manuscripts are found in Istanbul and complete sets can be reconstructed from the library holdings there. While Ṭabarī manuscripts are preserved in numerous European and Middle Eastern libraries, it is usually only individual volumes and not the entire work.

For modern scholars trained in the proper technique of text edition, it was natural to look especially to Istanbul for manuscripts to be used in the planned edition of *History*. In the second half of the nineteenth century, this was no simple task; but M. J. de Goeje and his co-workers succeeded admirably in obtain-

465. See Maqrīzī, *Khīṭat*, I, 408 f., cited, for instance, by Mez, *Renaissance*, 164 f.; Pedersen, *Arabic Book*, 118 f. Al-Maqrīzī has 1,200 but the correct 1,220 is preserved in Abū Shāmah, *Rawḍatayn*, I, 200, l. 4, ed. Cairo, 1956, I, 507, l. 7, and Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, XII, 266, year 567. See Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 50. One may wonder whether 20 in 1,220 has something to do with the figure of "more than twenty" in al-Musabbiḥī.

ing the necessary manuscript material and preparing an edition which presented an accurate text with a full critical apparatus and a good deal of additional information. In addition to the chief mover of the project, de Goeje (1836–1909), the honor roll of famous Orientalists of the past century who participated in the enterprise included J. Barth (1851–1914), S. Fraenkel (1855–1909), I. Guidi (1844–1935), S. Guyard (1846–84), M. Th. Houtsma (1851–1943), P. De Jong (1832–1890), D. H. Müller (1846–1912), Th. Nöldeke (1836–1930), E. Prym (1843–1913), V. Rosen (1849–1908), and H. Thorbecke (1837–90).⁴⁶⁶ The publisher was the great house of E. J. Brill, which accomplished the difficult task of printing between the years 1879 and 1901. All editorial material, such as the brief summaries of the contents accompanying the individual volumes, the introduction, the glossary of noteworthy terms, and the model index, was written in Latin, as was fitting at the time for an inter-European enterprise. The full Latin title of the edition, which chose *Kitāb Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk* for the Arabic title page (see above, 131), was *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari*, which led scholars often to refer to it as *Annales*.

The Leiden edition had practically nothing in the way of predecessors,⁴⁶⁷ and it has as yet not been replaced. Manuscripts in the collections of the Topkapısarayı in Istanbul were not accessible at the time. As far as our present knowledge goes, they are the only significant manuscript material not used in the Leiden edition, although the chance of making new discoveries remains. It would seem that the oldest portion of a manuscript of *History* is a number of folios bound into Ms. Köprülü, I, 1047, covering the years 64–66.⁴⁶⁸

The Istanbul material was largely used by the editor of the Cairo edition, Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, who had made himself a respected name as the editor of many important texts. His edition began to appear in 1969 and was reprinted repeatedly. Ibrāhīm omitted the critical apparatus of the Leiden edition. He basically

466. See Fück, *Arabische Studien*, in particular, 212 ff.

467. See Muth, *passim*.

468. The Istanbul manuscripts have been studied by R. Stephen Humphreys, who presented a preliminary report on his findings at the meeting of the American Oriental Society in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in April 1985.

restricted himself to indicating the variant readings of the Topkapısarayı manuscripts, with the exception of Ms. Revanköşk, no. 1555 (Karatay, *Catalogue*, no. 5735, see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xv f.). He also used some manuscript material from Egypt and India. It seems that he mainly listed variants he considered significant. He adopted the sound principle of showing the pagination of the standard Leiden edition in the margin of his text and thereby established the proper manner of reference for all who work on *History*. This procedure must be continued in any future edition, including the new scientific edition which it is hoped will some day be published and supersede the Leiden edition.

In connection with establishing the Arabic text, there was no pressing need to consult the Persian and Turkish versions. No case has as yet been made that these reworkings of the original could be of any real help, except, perhaps, with respect to additions not appearing in the available manuscripts. Even less useful are all the abridgments of the Arabic, the retranslations of the Persian version into Arabic, and the like. However, the difficult task of a bibliographical description of all this material remains to be undertaken, even if the results promise to be meager, at least as far as Ṭabari's original text is concerned.

A work such as *History* allows the incorporation in the text of additions at certain stages of the manuscript tradition. Such additions might have entered the text during Ṭabari's lifetime, coming from his own hand or that of others who might or might not have acted with his knowledge and approval. Later authors who used *History* show some such additions or corrections to the accepted text. There is a strong likelihood that they were not responsible for them but followed some manuscript authority. The chronological arrangement, in particular, facilitated insertions. Professional copyists would not normally have tampered with the text they copied, but scholarly readers might have made marginal additions which eventually entered the text. Usually, additions that came about in this manner cannot be expected to have left an express indication of their origin in the text; but *History*, II, 1368-72, contains what is specifically stated to be "an addition in the biography of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz not from the work of Abū Ja'far, to the beginning of the caliphate of Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān." The situation is less clear in *History*, II, 835-43. The

passage which raised doubts already in the mind of its editor is poorly attested in the manuscript tradition. It is also not found in the Topkapısarayı manuscript. It is thus difficult to accept it as a Ṭabariān addition, although this is not entirely precluded; the passage may go back to notations which Ṭabari had made for himself and which he had intended to insert in the appropriate places. In all the minor instances of additions or omissions, the decision as to whether they go back to Ṭabari must be made in each case individually. Probably, very many can indeed be considered as somehow connected to Ṭabari (see below, translation, Vol. XXXVIII, xvii ff.). Such small problems remain to be solved, before a definitive text of *History* is in our hands. Nothing of the sort, however, can be assumed to affect the understanding of the historical contents as Ṭabari meant it to be understood.

Previous Translations

Arabists are fond of recalling that the various editors of *History* were supposed to provide translations of the volumes edited by them, but only Theodor Nöldeke took up the idea and published his justly celebrated *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1879, reprinted Graz, 1973). His translation covered *History*, I, 813–1067; he omitted some brief portions as having no immediate bearing upon Persian history (I, 890, l. 4–892, l. 13, 901, l. 1–917, l. 17, 966, l. 15–981, l. 2).⁴⁶⁹ It is regrettable that the other editors did not follow Nöldeke's example. Their long and intimate occupation with the text uniquely qualified them for the task. Their translations, had they been published, would have been most helpful to subsequent translators and might have stimulated translations into other languages. Above all, the existence of *History* in translation would have constituted a strong incentive for historians who were not Near Eastern specialists to make use of it in their work.

Under the direction of G. E. von Grunbaum, Elma Marin trans-

469. When Nöldeke was urged to prepare a second edition of his Ṭabari translation, he spoke of it as "perhaps the best I have ever done" (letter to Goldziher, dated September 11, 1910, see Róbert Simon, *Ignác Goldziher*, 340).

Ṭabari's much less detailed and scattered treatment of ancient Iranian mythological history was translated by Christensen (see below, translation, n. 151).

lated Ṭabarī's treatment of the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim from *History*, II, 1164–1329. Her work was published by the American Oriental Society in New Haven in 1951. Individual passages of some lines to a number of pages in length have, of course, been translated in many publications, as was dictated by their particular subject matter.

It can be assumed that quite a few Arabists dreamed of preparing a complete translation, but their names went unrecorded, or, at least, are unknown to this writer.⁴⁷⁰ J. A. Williams contemplated the task, and D. M. Dunlop tried to organize a collaborative effort while being a professor at Columbia University. A translation of the whole by one person has certain advantages. It makes for much greater uniformity in approach and execution. As it demands a total long-term immersion in the text, it holds the promise of yielding unexpected insights. However, the chances of bringing such a major enterprise to final fruition are small. Collaboration by a number of scholars offers a better chance for success. Upon the initiative of Ehsan Yarshater of Columbia University, such a collaborative effort was initiated in 1971. It proved possible for Michael G. Morony, a participant in the project, to arrange for a division of the entire text into portions of about two hundred pages each, distributed over thirty-eight volumes. Thus, the chore of finding capable and willing translators could begin. It was thought impractical to postpone publication until all volumes were completed. The first three volumes (XXVII, XXXV, and XXXVIII) appeared in 1985 under the aegis of the State University of New York Press, which, like E. J. Brill before, had voluntarily declared itself ready to undertake the difficult work of publication in the service of scholarship. The present hope is that the entire task will be completed by 1995.^{*} As was the case with the Leiden edition, financial support had to be found. Strenuous efforts on the part of Ehsan Yarshater succeeded in surmounting this hurdle, but the search for funds has to continue in order to keep the enterprise going.

Toward the end of achieving a desirable degree of uniformity in presentation and format, some directions were deemed necessary

⁴⁷⁰ See also Muth, I.

^{*} As of December 1987, nine volumes of the English translation have been published.

to be given to the translators. At the same time, it was realized that the quality of the work might be enhanced if each translator relied primarily on his own judgment and expertise. A generous allowance of space was set aside for annotation, but again, it was left to the individual translator to make the difficult choice of what required annotation and how much information the footnotes should contain. General introductory remarks for each volume were suggested in order to provide all the necessary observations to be made in connection with a given volume, while keeping in mind the quite different character of the various sections of *History*.

The system of transliteration employed in the translation follows by and large a practice that has by now become standard in the scholarly publications of Arabists and Islamicists. This writer wishes, however, to express disagreement with the choice of -iyy- [-uww-] for -īy- [-ūw-]. Under the influence of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, this transliteration is widely used. It is plainly wrong, and not just a simple matter of convention. For the rendering of names of localities, exact transliteration was recommended as the norm, except for a very few place names that have accepted English forms of long standing; thus al-Kūfah (with the retention of the definite article), but Mecca, and not Makkah. Doubts as to what constitutes an accepted form are many. With the growing Western familiarity with Near Eastern geography, these doubts have not diminished but rather have increased. Accurate transliteration thus seemed preferable. The definite article in the names of frequently mentioned and quoted authors has often been omitted, especially in bibliographical references, and it is (almost) always Ṭabarī, instead of al-Ṭabarī.

A special concern has been how to best serve those readers who might not know Arabic. In fact, it is hoped that specialists will find the translation useful, but a translation primarily addresses itself to those not fully familiar with the original language. This regard for non-Arabists has led, for instance, to the insistence upon an unambiguous rendering of dates and upon providing chapter headings. It has also influenced the choice of the secondary literature in the footnotes, with the understanding that Arabic and Islamic studies have not yet progressed to the state where the secondary literature is sufficiently developed to make possible reliance on it exclusively. For Qur'ān quotations, the translation of

A. J. Arberry was suggested with some hesitation, but again, it was left to the individual translator to decide upon the most suitable renditions.

There was never any doubt as to which edition should constitute the basis for the translation, as the Leiden text is the only scientific edition in existence. Translators were, however, aware of the Cairo edition and the need to consult it wherever it was thought to contain a superior text. No priority was assigned to consulting manuscripts. Translators who had the opportunity were encouraged to do so. The gain to be obtained from the consultation of manuscripts did not loom large as a rule, but it is undeniable that in any occupation with ancient texts, no matter how carefully edited, recourse to manuscripts is of value, if only for the purpose of ascertaining that the available printed editions are indeed reliable.

The hope was expressed that the translations should be accurate and faithful to the original and, at the same time, idiomatic and fluent in English. This great ideal, if constantly invoked, is rarely achieved anywhere. Editorial and stylistic help has been provided to the extent possible. The translator's individuality could never be entirely suppressed nor, indeed, should it be.

The only liberty that the translators were asked to take with the Arabic text affects the presentation of *isnāds*, the chains of transmitters that served Ṭabarī as an indication of his sources. A literal translation would typically run like this: "A told me that B told us: C told us on the authority of D, on the authority of E that F said...." A less clumsy rendering was chosen to take its place, to wit: "According to A — B — C — D — E — F" Occasional exceptions as required by the flow of the narrative were permitted. The simplification is fully justified in view of the less cluttered text page resulting from it and the amount of space saved. It conceals, however, the numerous variations in the form of the *isnāds* indicated by Ṭabarī. These variations are important for a more precise understanding of the source situation. Scholars concerned with source problems must have recourse to the Arabic text.

At this time, the halfway mark in the project is not far off. When the entire work is completed, a retrospective on its genesis and execution will improve and enlarge upon the present brief and preliminary remarks.

Appendix A

A Partial Translation of Tafsīr on Qur. 17:79 (Above, pp. 75 f.)

Tafsīr, XV, 99, l. 21–100, l. 22:

“Even though the traditions we have mentioned on the authority of the Prophet and his Companions and the Followers indicate the correct interpretation of *maqāman maḥmūdān* in Qur. 17:79 (as referring to Muḥammad’s role as intercessor on the Day of Resurrection), Mujāhid’s statement that God will seat Muḥammad on His Throne remains one whose soundness cannot be rejected either on the basis of tradition (*khābar*) or on the basis of speculation (*naẓar*). This is so because there is no tradition from the Messenger of God or anyone of his Companions or the Followers that declares it to be impossible.

With respect to speculation, all adherents of Islam differ on the implication of (such seating) in only three ways:

One group (*firqah*) says: God is separate from His creation. He was so before He created the things. Then He created the things but was not contiguous with them. He Himself remained as He had always been, except that being not contiguous with the things He created, He is necessarily separate from them, since any maker of the things must be either contiguous with the material substances (*ajsām*) or separate from them. So they said. As this is so, and God is the maker (*fā’il*) of the things and, according to their statement, He is not permitted to be described as being contiguous with the things, their line of thought makes it necessary to

assume that He is separate from them. According to their theory (*madhhab*), it is the same whether he seats Muḥammad on His Throne or upon earth, since their statement implies that His separateness from His Throne and His separateness from His earth mean the same, since He is (equally) separate from both and is not contiguous with either.

A second group says: Before God created the things, there was no thing for Him to be contiguous with or separate from. Then He created the things. He set them up by His power, remaining Himself as He had always been before His creation of the things, not being contiguous with nor separate from any thing. According to their statement, too, it is the same whether He seats Muḥammad on His Throne or upon His earth, since according to their statement, His Throne and His earth are the same with respect to His being neither contiguous with nor separate from the one or the other.

A third group says: Before God created the things, there was no thing for him to be contiguous with or separate from. Then He created (*aḥdatha* and *khalāqa*) the things. He created for Himself a throne, upon which He sat straight and with which He became contiguous. Correspondingly, before He created the things, there was no thing for which He would provide sustenance or which He would deprive of it. Having created the things, He provided sustenance for one thing and deprived another of it, gave to one and withheld from another. So they said. Thus likewise, before He created the things, there was no thing for Him to be contiguous with or separate from. He created the things and then He was contiguous with the Throne by sitting on it but no other creature. He may be contiguous with or separate from any of His creatures He wants. According to their theory, too, it is the same whether He seated Muḥammad on His Throne or seated him on a pulpit of light, since their statement implies that God's sitting on His Throne is not by way of occupying the entire Throne, nor is seating Muḥammad (on it) necessitating the attribute of divinity (for Muḥammad) or depriving him of the attribute of humanity (*rubūbiyyah*-*'ubūdiyyah*), just like Muḥammad's being kept separate from the things he is kept separate from does not necessitate for him the attribute of divinity or deprive him of the attribute of humanity (merely) because he is described as being kept separate

from them as, according to those who make this statement, God is described as being separate from them. So they say. If the meaning of being separate (*mubāyin*) and being kept separate (*mubāyan*) does not necessitate for Muḥammad to be deprived of the attribute of humanity and to enter into the conceptual realm (*ma'nā*) of divinity, then his sitting on the Throne of the Merciful One does not necessitate that.

From what we have said, it has become clear that it is not impossible for an adherent of Islam to say what Mujāhid has said, namely, that God will seat Muḥammad on His Throne. If someone says: We do not disapprove of God's seating Muḥammad on His Throne (in view of the following tradition transmitted by) 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-'Azīm—Yahyā b. Kathīr—al-Jurayrī—Sayf al-Sadūsī—'Abdallāh b. Salām:⁴⁷¹ 'On the Day of Resurrection, Muḥammad will be on the Lord's footstool (*kursī*),' but we disapprove of God's seating him *together with Him*, it should be said: Is it then permissible in your opinion that He seat him on it but not together with him? If he permits this, he is led to affirming that either he is together with Him, or God seats him (on the Throne) while being Himself either separate from it or neither contiguous with nor separate from it. Whatever alternative he chooses, he thereby enters into something that he disapproves. If he says that it is not permissible, he deviates from the statements of all the groups we have reported. This means diverging from the views of all adherents of Islam, since there is no other possible statement than those three, according to each of which Mujāhid's statement in this sense is not impossible."

471. (Al-) 'Abbās b. 'Abd al-'Azīm al-'Anbarī died before 250/864 (see *TB*, XII, 127 f.; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, V, 121 f.). His authority, Yahyā b. Kathīr (al-'Anbarī), died after 200/816 (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, XI, 266, no. 536). Yahyā's authority was Salm b. Ja'far (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 127 f.), omitted in *Tafsīr*. Abū Mas'ūd Sa'īd b. Iyās al-Jurayrī died in 144/761[2] (see Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 5-7). The unidentified Sayf al-Sadūsī and the famous 'Abdallāh b. Salām (see below, translation, n. 178) are suspect. The tradition appears in *Khallāl*, *Musnad*, 76, 86, 92 f.



Appendix B



A Classification and Chronology of Ṭabari's Literary Production

The following classification of Ṭabari's work according to subject matter is slightly uncertain where it deals with works that are not preserved.

Law:	<i>Ādāb al-manāsik</i> <i>Al-Ādar (?) fī al-uṣūl</i> <i>Basīṭ</i> <i>Ikhtilāf</i> <i>Khafīf</i> <i>Laṭīf</i> <i>Mūjaz</i> <i>Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam</i>
Qur'ān:	<i>Faṣl (fī al-qirā'āt)</i> <i>Jāmi' al-bayān (Tafsīr)</i>
Ḥadīth:	<i>'Ibārat al-ru'yā</i> <i>Tahdhīb</i> See also <i>Faḍā'il</i>
Theology:	<i>Dalālah</i> <i>Faḍā'il</i> <i>Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār</i>

Ṣarīḥ
Tabṣīr

Religious Ethics: *Ādāb al-nufūs*
See also *Faḍā'il* and *Mūjaz*

History: *Dhayl*
Ta'rīkh

Any attempt to establish a relative chronological order must reckon with the fact that Ṭabarī worked on his large works throughout his career. He also started on projects, worked and lectured on them sporadically, and maybe never published them. In a number of cases, no sufficient data are ascertainable.

Works that can be dated with reasonable certainty:

1. *Radd 'alā Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam* (about 255)
2. *Laṭīf* (quoted in *Tafsīr*, *Ikhtilāf*, *Tahdhīb*)
3. *Ikhtilāf*
4. *Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār* (before 270, left incomplete ?)
5. *Tafsīr* (270–90) (cited in *Ta'rīkh*)
6. *Tabṣīr* (about 290)
7. *Khafīf* (291–96)
8. *Ta'rīkh* (294, 302) (cited in *Dhayl*)
9. *Dhayl* (after 300)

Incomplete at the time of Ṭabarī's death:

Ādāb al-nufūs
Basīṭ (quoted in *History* as forthcoming, but
presumably to be placed between 4 and 5 as regards
its starting time)
Faḍā'il
Mūjaz
Radd 'alā dhī al-asfār (above 4)
Tahdhīb (to be placed between 2 and 3)

Projects that were not executed:

Al-Ādar (ʔ) fī al-uṣūl
Aḥkām sharāʾiʿ al-Islām
Dalālah (mentioned in *History*)
ʿIbārat al-ruʾyā
al-Qiyās (planned at the end of his life)

As yet unclassifiable:

Ādāb al-manāsik
Ādāb al-nufūs
Faṣl (fī al-qirāʾāt) (after *Taʾrīkh ʔ*)
Ṣarīḥ (before or after 6 ?)



From the Creation to the Flood





Translator's Foreword



The monotheistic environment of the Near East provided a powerful model for the idea that history must be written as beginning with the creation of the world. In Islam, the tradition continued, and history was presented as a continuum stretching seamlessly from the six days of creation to contemporary times, although neither before nor after Ṭabarī were histories so commonly composed in this manner as is often assumed. The material for primeval pre-Islamic history which was abundantly available to Ṭabarī was determined by the Qur'ān. A vast explanatory mythology developed in connection with it at an early stage. Some of the legends that were inherited or invented were occasionally ascribed to the Prophet directly. Much more frequently, they were credited to certain early Muslim authorities. Qur'ān commentaries drawing on this information were composed in unpublished, and soon also in published, form at least since the early eighth century. Ṭabarī, as the author of what in all likelihood was the most voluminous Qur'ān commentary ever assembled down to his time, was thoroughly familiar with most, if not all, of these works.

His basic task in the first part of his *History* was to make historical sense out of the material collected by earlier scholars and largely taken over into his own commentary, to which he refers by its proper title (below, n. 562)—here it is referred to simply as *Tafsīr*. In rearranging and presenting the material as sequential history, he used throughout the same literary method as *Tafsīr*, providing first a summary of the topic to be discussed, then quot-

ing the sources, and, finally, wherever he considered it necessary, giving a critical evaluation of them (frequently an effort to reach a compromise between divergent views). He succeeded in his effort to historicize legend as well as was possible in his time and age. Later Muslim historians who used Ṭabarī's *History* were considerably more skeptical than he as to the compatibility of all that legendary material with what they had come to consider history. Miskawayh, for instance, dared to dismiss all antediluvian accounts as being too poorly documented for consideration by historians. Ibn al-Athīr criticized Ṭabarī for bad historical and literary judgement with respect to some of the material the latter had thought worthy of consideration.¹

In keeping with the methods developed by the traditional religious science of his day, Ṭabarī rightly stressed the traditional nature of *all* historical knowledge. What happened in the past can be known only by reports originating with an eyewitness, or at least a contemporary, and handed down from one individual to another in successive stages. It was beyond his ken to realize that in dealing with what we call prehistorical happenings, "history" can be approached only by means of intellectual (or, nowadays, scientific) speculation. Ṭabarī did have a certain inkling of the problem involved. Repeatedly, he asserts that only traditional information can be counted on to prove the soundness of historical data and that the usefulness of intellectual speculation in this connection must be discounted. With respect to the former, his statement was apologetic; with respect to the latter, it was polemical. The stress on the supremacy of intellect and reason (*'aql*) was the hallmark of the Mutakallimūn, the philosophical theologians of his age, who tried with considerable success at the time to assert themselves, and it is their introduction of *'aql* into the Muslim view of the world that Ṭabarī attempted to reject while defending the supremacy of tradition.

In one respect, however, he clearly shows how deeply he was influenced by the new thought system. It cannot be decided whether he himself fully realized it—this may indeed have been the case—but he admitted (text below, I, 6) that his historical research did include a small measure of rational argumentation. At the begin-

1. See below, n. 3 of the Foreword and nn. 436 and 1029 to the translation.

ning of the *History*, he raises the question of the nature and definition of time as being fundamental to all history. His answer remains traditional, but the question could be raised in this form only after the Aristotelian analysis of the physical world in which human history evolves had become familiar in Muslim civilization. Ṭabarī argues that all history is a function of time and that, therefore, a definition of time that clearly establishes its meaning is the crucial starting point for historical investigation. This was an important insight, and there appears to be a strong possibility that Ṭabarī was in fact the first to introduce it prominently into historiography (as apparently suggested by one of his early biographers, see above, General Intro., n. 446). It is unfortunately true that most of the Arabic historical literature that could serve for comparison is yet to be recovered. The *History* of al-Ya'qūbī (d. 284/897–98 or later) is incomplete in the beginning, where the same argument regarding time might have been made. A century earlier, Khalifah b. Khayyāṭ (d. 204/819–20) had begun his *History* with no more than a brief note on the term *ta'rikh*, understood by him not as "history," but as the means for dating events—a note that is not at all informed by philosophical reflection.² Thus, Ṭabarī's approach to time in history may very well have been absent in earlier histories. It can be assumed, at any rate, to have developed at the earliest in the course of the third/ninth century. If it is indeed original with Ṭabarī, it is another truly remarkable testimony to his intellectual alertness. It may be added that Ibn al-Athīr was fully aware of the origin of Ṭabarī's speculation on the concept of time. It belonged, he states, in the discussion of the (theological) principles of the Mutakallimūn and had no place in a historical work.³

A particularly difficult challenge to the historian's critical acumen were views known in ninth-century Baghdad on the origin and early history of the world which competed and often were in conflict with the monotheistic tradition shared by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This had given pause to historians before Ṭabarī and had led to crude attempts at finding some common ground between the disparate traditions. Ṭabarī, like many of the leading scholars in Iraq, a man with ties to Iran, restricted himself to the

2. See also Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*,² 287, n. 4.

3. See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, I, 12.

Magian (Zoroastrian) material and inserted rather brief reports on it in what he felt were appropriate places. He gives the impression of doing that with some reluctance and an apparent unwillingness to take those alien beliefs too seriously. Indeed, the very existence of competing mythological histories may have severely tested Ṭabarī as an historian and as a faithful Muslim.



The basis for the following translation has been the Leiden text as edited by the Semitist Jakob Barth in Leiden, 1879–81. It is, however, obvious that the Istanbul manuscript Topkapısarayı Ahmet III 2929/1,⁴ which was consulted by M. Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm for the Cairo edition, has a text that, in general, is superior to that of the manuscripts used in Leiden. At the very beginning, Ms. Ahmet III provides the only reliable text, but its superiority is evident nearly everywhere. In most cases, its readings therefore have been adopted from the Cairo edition with no further comment. The reader of this translation should, however, rest assured that while noteworthy, the variants hold no substantive implications for the understanding of the text.

No manuscripts have been consulted directly for the present translation. There are passages here and there where the manuscript situation remains slightly uncertain, and a look at the manuscripts might have been helpful. A great merit of the Cairo edition that deserves to be mentioned is its occasional use of *Tafsīr*, from which Ṭabarī drew much of his material for this volume.

For all practical purposes, the following pages are a commentary on Genesis, chapters 1–10, from the creation of the world to Noah and the Flood—a mirror reflecting centuries of thought and a new Muslim way of looking at the ancient story. This being the case, the greatest selectivity in the number and kind of notes to be included was required. The scholarly literature deserving attention is nearly unlimited, and the problems are numerous. Much that could and should have been said has been passed over in silence. The following considerations have guided the choice of notes:

1. Qur'ānic quotations have, of course, been always noted. How-

4. See Karatay, *Catalogue*, III, 339 f., no. 5730.

ever, the artful weaving together of quotations from and allusions to the Qur'ān, which is evident to anyone reading the Arabic text, could not always be brought out in translation.

2. The chains of transmitters (*isnād*) are a most important key to the early history of Muslim historiography. At least some information had to be provided for each individual occurring in them. All transmitters therefore have been briefly annotated at their first mention in the text. In order to facilitate their location through the Index, short forms of their names appearing in the text have often, but not consistently, been completed by additions in parentheses.

The identification of individual transmitters has been restricted here to basically two works, the *History of Baghdad* (*Ta'rikh Baghdād*, cited as *TB*) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī and Ibn Ḥajar's *Tahdhib*. *TB* brings us quite close to Ṭabarī's time and environment. *Tahdhib* was compiled in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century and constitutes the culmination of the labors of *ḥadīth* scholars in the field of biography. The information it contains is a summary of all the earlier literature. The significant dates for the life and death of the transmitters are all faithfully reported. Where Ibn Ḥajar fails to indicate such dates, it is almost certain that none ever existed in any earlier source. As a matter of fact, early biographical collections were much more chary with dates than later ones. This is proof that scholarly research and speculation, as against direct attestation, were responsible for providing many of the dates. Scholarship is never infallible, and, in certain cases, the very identification of an individual may have depended upon a kind of circular reasoning that reconstructed relationships on the basis of the *isnāds* as found in the *ḥadīth* collections and the *tafsīr* literature. Ibn Ḥajar often leaves us with a number of alternative dates to choose from. Usually no decision has been made here as to which of the divergent dates may be correct, even where this could possibly have been done. When references to the one or other biographical work in addition to *TB* and *Tahdhib* have been given, this has been done for some reason, which, however, has been left unstated.

The role of *isnāds* as indications of Ṭabarī's sources has been somewhat obscured by the schematic representation adopted here, in which simple dashes separate individual transmitters.

However convenient, this scheme removes valuable if ambiguous hints at the various stages of the process of written transmission.

The material quoted here by Ṭabarī from *Tafsīr* was no doubt taken from earlier Qur'ān commentaries, most of them still lost or imperfectly known. Recensions of some of those commentaries have recently been published, such as the works of Sufyān al-Thawrī, Mujāhid, and Muqātil.⁵ It should be noted that the corresponding information provided by Ṭabarī in traditions with *isnāds* including these men can be only very rarely traced back to them. In view of the complex history of the compilation of those recensions, as discussed by G. Schoeler and others (below, n. 503), this is hardly surprising. It does not, however, cast doubt on the genuineness of the attribution.

Among the secondary literature on the transmitters, Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (GAS) has been cited as consistently as possible. It allows for checking the literary activities of a given scholar and, in particular, finding out whether he is known as the author of a Qur'ān commentary. The short article by Heribert Horst, "Zur Überlieferung im Korankommentar aṭ-Ṭabarī," has been systematically referred to, not so much for its occasional additional information as for its concise discussion of the configurations of Ṭabarī's *isnāds*. The important study of G. H. A. Juynboll, *Muslim Tradition. Studies in Chronology, Provenance and Authorship of Early Ḥadīth* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), goes, as its title indicates, far beyond the elementary data of concern to us here.

3. Among the sources of the *History*, Ṭabarī's own *Tafsīr* has always been consulted and usually cited. Close parallels from earlier or contemporary works have occasionally been mentioned. As is the case with much of the earlier *ḥadīth* literature, his primary historical sources, such as the works of Ibn Ishāq and the Kalbī family, are also lost. Little use has been made of the *ḥadīth* literature. Works by later authors have been referred to only in exceptional cases. This also includes the literature on the prophetic stories (*qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā'*). W. M. Brinner's forthcoming translation of the closely related work by al-Tha'labī and W. M. Thackston's translation of the very different *Tales of the Prophets of al-Kisā'i*

5. For the situation with respect to the *Tafsīr* of Mujāhid, however, see the introduction of the *Tafsīr*'s editor, 25–27.

(Boston, 1978) show the difference between their approach and that of the historian.

4. With respect to the sources of Ṭabari's sources—that is, the comparative data to be found in Christian, Jewish, and Middle-Persian literature (including the later Firdawsī)—only a few references have been given in the notes. The relationship of Ṭabari's material to the Book of Genesis requires many more references and discussions than appear in the notes here. The Jewish midrashic literature and secondary works, such as Speyer's *Biblische Erzählungen*, should have been referred to more frequently than is actually the case. A detailed analysis, for instance, of the role of the *Schatzhöhle* tradition was, of course, not possible here.⁶ The references given to non-Muslim sources can do no more than serve as a stimulus for further investigation.



In his review of E. Marin's translation of Ṭabari's section dealing with the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim, Helmut Ritter remarked that translations of difficult Arabic texts such as Ṭabari's *History* should preferably be undertaken as collaborative efforts of more than one translator, for, Ritter said, "someone who translates by himself falls all too easily into the unavoidable vicious traps waiting for translators from this harmfully deceptive ("heimtückisch") language. The collaboration of two or more scholars gives at least some protection against getting lost in the Arabian desert."⁷ My own lifetime experience has convinced me more and more of the truth of Ritter's impishly phrased remark. True collaboration in Ritter's sense has not been possible here, and mistakes can probably be found with comparative ease. But I have at least enjoyed and profited from the help of fellow scholars. I may mention G. Böwering, who gave me access to printed editions and manuscripts of early Qur'ān commentaries in his pos-

6. A. Goetze discusses the influence of the work on the histories of al-Ya'qūbi and Ṭabari in *Zeitschrift für Semitistik* 3 [1924]: 60–71, 153–55.

7. See *Oriens* 6 [1953]: 157.

session, and J. Lassner, whose editorial work has gone far beyond the ordinary duty of an editor. Infelicities of style that will be encountered are the result of my having occasionally failed to accept my editor's suggestions.⁸

Franz Rosenthal

8. I may mention the frequent "He continued (said)" interrupting the narrative. I have retained it, although it will no doubt puzzle the reader. It can mean that the preceding statement is completed or, more commonly, that it is being continued. It can also indicate that there is a break in the narrative as compared to the source from which the statement is quoted. Often no decision is possible, and I have refrained from speculating about its meaning in a given context, or from simply omitting it.

Volume II

Translated by William M. Brinner

This volume records the lives and efforts of some of the prophets preceeding the birth of Mohammad. It devotes most of its message to two towering figures—Abraham, the Friend of God, and his great-grandson, Joseph. The story is not, however simply a repetition of Biblical tales in a slightly altered form, for Tabari sees the ancient pre-Islamic Near East as an area in which the histories of three different peoples are acted out, occasionally meeting and intertwining. Thus ancient Iran, Israel, and Arabia serve as the stages on which actors such as Biwarashb, the semi-legendary Iranian king, Noah and his progeny, and the otherwise unknown Arabian prophets Hud and Salih appear and act.

In the pages of this volume we read of the miraculous birth and early life of Abraham, and of his struggle against his father's idolatry. God grants him sons—Ishmael from Hagar and Isaac from Sarah—and the conflicts between the two mothers, the subsequent expulsion of Hagar, and her settling in the vicinity of Mecca, all lead to the story of Abraham's being commanded to build God's sanctuary there. Abraham is tested by God, both by being commanded to sacrifice his son (and here Tabari shows his fairness by presenting the arguments of Muslim scholars as to whether that son was Ishmael or Isaac) and by being given commandments to follow both in personal behavior and in ritual practice. The account of Abraham is interlaced with tales of the cruel tyrant Nimrod, who tried in vain both to burn Abraham in fire and to reach the heavens to fight with God. The story of Abraham's nephew Lot and the wicked people of Sodom also appears here, with the scholars once again arguing—this time over what the exact crimes were for which the Sodomites were destroyed.

Before proceeding to the story of Joseph, which is recounted in great detail, we linger over the accounts of two figures associated with ancient Arabia in Muslim tradition: the Biblical Job, who despite his trials and sufferings does not rail against God, and Shu'ayb, usually associated with the Biblical Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses. Finally we meet Joseph, whose handsome appearance, paternal preference, and subsequent boasting to his brothers lead to his being cast into a pit and ending up as a slave in Egypt. His career is traced in some detail: the attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife, his imprisonment and eventual release after becoming able to interpret dreams, and his rise to power as ruler of Egypt. The volume ends with the moving story of Joseph's reunion with his brothers, the tragicomic story of how he reveals himself to them, and the final reunion with his aged father who is brought to Egypt to see his son's power and glory.

This is proto-history told in fascinating detail, of us in different contexts, as well as of others completely unknown to Western readers.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME II

Prophets and Patriarchs



The History of Al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME II

Prophets and Patriarchs

translated and annotated

by

William M. Brinner

University of California, Berkeley

State University of New York Press

The preparation of this volume was made possible by a grant from the Translation Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency; and by the Persian Heritage Foundation.

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lasner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

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Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

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Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

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Translator's Foreword



Like almost all other medieval Muslim historians and chroniclers, Ṭabarī begins his history with the creation of the world and the story of Adam. As he proceeds to follow the descendants of Adam, his point of view becomes clear. The two great civilizations to which the Arabs—and hence Islam—were heirs were the civilization of the ancient Israelites, as recorded in the Qur'ān and in Muslim tradition, and the civilization of ancient Iran. These two civilizations, in turn, must be connected with each other, must be shown as two strands which intertwine, genealogically and historically, and give rise to pre-Islamic civilization which was to be transformed by the coming of Islam.

This volume treats one part of that early history. Based on Qur'ān, on Muslim tradition of the Israelite past, and on a version of Iranian history very close to that found in the *Shāhnāmeḥ*, the national epic of Iran, it unfolds the stories of Noah, Abraham, the Arabian prophets—Hūd, Šālīḥ, Job and Shu'ayb—Lot, and Joseph. These tales form part of the literary genre of *qiṣaṣ al-anbiyā'* or tales of the prophets, namely stories of biblical figures regarded as prophets by Muslims. Unlike most such collections, these fascinating tales are treated by Ṭabarī with a certain scholarly detachment, making clear his own acceptance of or doubts about certain traditions such as which of his sons Abraham was commanded to sacrifice, Isaac or Ishmael, or exactly which sins of Lot's people brought about the destruction of Sodom. Together with this comes the interweaving of Iranian tradition as in the case of Bīwarasb—a legendary ruler—and

Noah, or of Nimrod, the persecutor of Abraham, and his role in Iranian history.

This is proto-history presented in fascinating detail and with the meticulous scholarship which Ṭabarī displays when he deals with more recent or contemporary history in later volumes.

The translator's thanks go to Dr. Mahmoud Omidsalar for his assistance with the Old Persian material; to Dr. Maurice Salib for reviewing the translation; and to Mr. Jeffrey Deboo for his assistance with the final revision and typing.

William Brinner
University of California, Berkeley

The Children of Israel
Volume III
Translated by William M. Brinner

This volume continues the stories of the Israelite patriarchs and prophets who figured in Volume II, as well as of the semi-mythical rulers of ancient Iran. In addition to biblical, Qur'anic, and legendary accounts about Moses, Aaron, and the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt; of the Judges, Samuel and Ezekiel; and of Saul, David, and Solomon, it includes a version of Iranian prehistory that emphasizes the role of Manūchihr (Manūshihr in Arabic) in creating the Iranian nation and state.

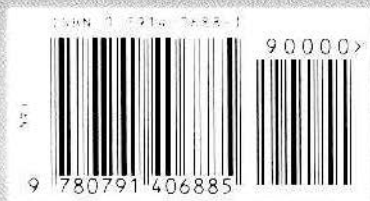
Woven into these accounts are stories about figures belonging to the very earliest literatures of the Middle East: the mysterious al-Khiḍr, with echoes from the epic of the Sumero-Akkadian hero Gilgamesh; the legendary exploits of Dhū l-Qarnayn, mirroring the ancient romance of Alexander; and incorporating elements about the encounter of King Solomon and Bilqīs, the Queen of Sheba, of Jewish *midrash* and South Arabian lore.

The Islamic empire was at its political and economic height during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and a new civilization was forged at the caliphal court and in society at large. One of the literary triumphs of that civilization was this rich and colorful tapestry belonging to the Islamic genre of "tales of the prophets." The tales in this volume show how threads from all the ancient civilizations of the Middle East were incorporated, absorbed, and Islamized in the brilliant fabric of that new civilization.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME III

The Children of Israel



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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl mulūk*)

VOLUME III

The Children of Israel

translated and annotated
by

William M. Brinner

University of California, Berkeley

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Preface



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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume 1.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Abbreviations



- El.² *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., I—. Leiden: Brill, 1960—.
- Ej: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, I—XVI. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972.
- Enc. Ir.: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. I—. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982—.
- GAL: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. 2 vols. and Supplement, 3 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1937—49.
- GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967—.



Translator's Foreword



This volume continues the accounts of the prophets of ancient Israel and of ancient Arabian tradition, and further illustrates al-Ṭabarī's efforts at the historical synchronization of these accounts with ancient Iranian foundation myths. In this difficult process, al-Ṭabarī shows again and again his striving for historical accuracy, despite the heavy odds against him. Lacking the requisite linguistic knowledge and the "primary sources" that are the *sine qua non* of modern scholarship, al-Ṭabarī trained his critical and quite skeptical eye on the tales transmitted by various traditionists, accepting some, questioning or rejecting others.

In this ongoing story, several key figures loom especially large: the mysterious al-Khidr, whose identification with the prophet Elijah al-Ṭabarī rejects; Moses; David; and Solomon, David's son. Tales about these figures make up the bulk of this volume, although stories of other individuals are included in briefer form as well: Balaam, Korah, Elijah, Elisha, Ezekiel, the Judges of Israel, Samuel, Saul, and Goliath, not to speak of ancient Iranian figures, including the story of how the boundary between the Iranians and the Turks was determined. Perhaps serving as a bridge between these traditions, there is the enigmatic figure of Dhū al-Qarnayn, who is mentioned in the Qur'ān. Al-Ṭabarī sees the name as encompassing two individuals: one the semimythical figure of the *Alexanderroman*, living at the time of Moses, who accompanies al-Khidr on his strange journey, and the later Dhū al-Qarnayn, the historical Alexander, whose exploits will be recounted in the next volume of this series.

In rendering Qur'ānic quotations into English, I have relied on M. M. Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, both for the English translation and the numbering of verses. I have, however, modified his biblical style and, in places where an alternative translation seemed more apposite, have turned to A. J. Arberry's *The Koran Interpreted*.

In his Introduction to Volume XXXVIII of this translation series Franz Rosenthal stresses the need for a new, critical edition of the Arabic text of al-Ṭabarī. Lacking that, one is left with some difficult textual problems, some of which may be solved by references to the works of such other medieval Muslim writers as al-Thaʿlabī, who used some, though not all, of the same sources as al-Ṭabarī, or Ibn al-Athīr, who, centuries later, used this text as the basis for his own, much-abbreviated rendition of these tales.

In dealing with some of these problems, I have been greatly aided by the advice and suggestions of several colleagues and friends, but, above all, by the knowledge of Iranian matters of Prof. Martin Schwartz and Dr. P. O. Skjærvø and the meticulous editing of Dr. Everett K. Rowson. I wish to thank them for their assistance in preventing some egregious errors. Those that remain are my own responsibility. I also wish to express my sincere thanks to my student assistant, Amy Forga, for her devoted work in the preparation of the manuscript for publication.

William M. Brinner

**The Ancient Kingdoms
Volume IV
Translated by Moshe Perlmann**

In this volume Ṭabari takes up the history of the ancient world, focusing on the Iranians and the Israelites after the time of Solomon. He establishes a comparative chronology between the two nations; viewing Bahman, the Persian king, as the son of Esther, and his daughter, Khumānī, the mother of Darius. Ṭabari's synchronization also leads him into a discussion of North and South Arabia, in which stories about King Jadhīmah, Queen Zabbā, and the tribes of Ṭasm and Jadīs appear.

Falling outside the general scheme of the volume, are other details. These are concentrated in five chapters on the biblical stories of Samson and Delilah, and on Jonah, commentary on a Quranic passage concerning three divine envoys, and on two stories of Christian antiquity, the Seven Sleepers and the martyr Jirjīs.

Ṭabari presents a mass of Iranian, Jewish, Christian, and Arabian lore in order to create a unified view of the material. His treatment of the mythical Iranian kings, as they battle Turanians and other foes, extends beyond the time of Alexander and his successors to the era of the Gospels, John the Baptist, and Jesus. Tales of the Israelites include the story of Asa and Zerah the Indian, remarkable for its development of the Biblical nucleus and variants of the history of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME IV

The Ancient Kingdoms



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Tabarī
(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME IV

The Ancient Kingdoms

translated and annotated
by

Moshe Perlmann

University of California, Los Angeles

annotations of Iranian names and terms
by Shaul Shaked
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

State University of New York Press

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.



Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of

the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translators.

Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes

as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Translator's Foreword



The events of the present volume revolve around two major subjects: Iran, and the Hebrews after Solomon. Both of these subjects include data on the past of the Arabs (Anbār, Hīrah and the Jews in the Hijāz). Judaeo-Christian lore (Christ, the Seven Sleepers, Saint George, Jonah, Samson) is set in the period of the obscure princelings who ruled between Alexander the Great and the rise of the Sasanian Empire. Not only does Ṭabarī combine Arab and Iranian themes, but he attempts to synchronize them with the body of Judaeo-Christian lore. For information concerning the latter, the author relied on early Islamic authors, principally, Ibn al-Kalbī and Wahb b. Munabbih. Much of his data is derived from the Alexander Romance on the one hand, and on the other hand from a cycle of legend and tradition that was later given artistic shape by Daqīqī and Firdawsī who flourished within a half century of his death.

M. P.

Los Angeles, California

**The Sāsānids, the Byzantines,
the Lakhmids, and Yemen
Volume V
Translated by C. E. Bosworth**

This volume of al-Ṭabarī's *History* has a particularly wide sweep and interest. It provides the most complete and detailed historical source for the Persian empire of the Sāsānids, whose four centuries of rule were one of the most glorious periods in Persia's long history. It also gives information on the history of pre-Islamic Arabs of the Mesopotamian desert fringes and eastern Arabia (in al-Ḥīra and the Ghassānid kingdom), and on the quite separate civilization of South Arabia, the Yemen, otherwise known mainly by inscriptions. It furnishes details of the centuries'-long warfare of the two great empires of Western Asia, the Sāsānids and the Byzantine Greeks, a titanic struggle which paved the way for the subsequent rise of the new faith of Islam. The volume is thus of great value for scholars, from Byzantinists to Semitists and Iranists. It provides the first English translation of this key section of al-Ṭabarī's work, one for which non-Arabists have hitherto relied on a partial German translation, meritorious for its time but now 120 years old. This new translation is enriched by a detailed commentary which takes into account up-to-date scholarship.

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VOLUME V

*The Sāsānids, the Byzantines,
the Lakhmids, and Yemen*



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME V

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C. E. Bosworth

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Preface



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The *History* has been divided here into thirty-nine volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear in the margins of the translated volumes.

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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see the preface to Volume I.

Abbreviations

- AAE: *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*
AJSLL: *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures*
AKAW Berlin: *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin*
AKGW Göttingen: *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*
AM: *Asia Major*
AO: *Acta Orientalia*
AO Hung.: *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*
BAR: *British Archaeological Reports*
BEO: *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*
BGA: *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*
BIFAO: *Bulletin de l'Institut Française d'Archéologie Orientale*
BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
BZ: *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CAJ: *Central Asiatic Journal*
CHI III: *The Cambridge History of Iran. III. The Seleucid, Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. E. Yarshater, 2 parts. Cambridge, 1983.
CHI IV: *The Cambridge History of Iran. IV. The Period from the Arab Invasion to the Saljuqs*, ed. R. N. Frye. Cambridge, 1975.
CRAIBL: *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*
DOP: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, first edition*
EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition*
EIr: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*
GAS: *Fuat Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 9 vols. Leiden, 1975- .

- GMS: *Gibb Memorial Series*
 HdO: *Handbuch der Orientalistik*
 IA: *Iranica Antiqua*
 IC: *Islamic Culture*
 Iran JBIPS: *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*
 IJ: *Indo-Iranian Journal*
 IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*
 IS: *Iranian Studies*
 Isl.: *Der Islam*
 JA: *Journal Asiatique*
 JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
 JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
 JIS: *Journal of Islamic Studies*
 JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
 JSAI: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
 JSS: *Journal of Semitic Studies*
 MO: *Le Monde Oriental*
 MUSJ: *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*
 NC: *The Numismatic Chronicle*
 OC: *Oriens Christianus*
 OS: *Orientalia Suecana*
 PSAS: *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*
 PW: *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*,
 ed. G. Wissowa et alii, 34 vols. + 15 vols. Supplement. Stuttgart,
 1893-Munich, 1972. *Der Kleine Pauly*, 5 vols. Stuttgart, 1964-
 Munich, 1975.
 RHR: *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*
 RMMM: *Revue du Monde Musulman et la Méditerranée*
 RSO: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*
 SbWAW: *Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*
 SI: *Studia Islamica*
 St Ir: *Studia Iranica*
 TAVO: *Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients*
 WbKAS: *Wörterbuch des klassischen arabischen Sprache*
 WO: *Die Welt des Orients*
 WZKM: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*
 ZA: *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*
 ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

In citations from the Qur'ān, where two different numbers are given for a verse, the first is that of Flügel's text and the second one that of the official Egyptian edition.



Translator's Foreword



I

The section of al-Ṭabarī's *History* on the four centuries preceding the rise of the Prophet Muḥammad continues the nonannalistic treatment of the pre-Islamic period as a whole, but it departs from the previous retailing of stories about the Children of Israel, the earlier prophets and the ancient peoples of the Near East and Arabia, which formed the first tier of Islamic salvation history, that of a pristine monotheism which had become clouded over by idolatry and a time of ignorance before God had sent His Prophet to mankind. Instead, although we do not get the year-by-year treatment of events used for post-Islamic times, we emerge instead into something that is recognizable as real history: the origins of the successors to the Parthian Arsacids of Persia, the Sāsānids, and the subsequent four centuries' history of the dynasty; the Sāsānids' sporadic episodes of warfare with the Romans/Byzantines, and, on the eastern frontiers of the Sāsānid empire, occasional wars with the peoples of Inner Asia, the Tūrān of Firdawsī's version of the Persian national epic, the *Shāh-nāmah*; the Sāsānids' attempts to maintain a buffer-state on the desert fringes of Mesopotamia in the shape of the Arab Lakhmid princes who, it was hoped, would protect Mesopotamia from depredations by the Bedouins of inner Arabia; the Sāsānids' installing of military bases on the western shores of the Persian Gulf in order to turn the gulf into a Persian lake, safe for their commerce; from the fifth century onwards, an interventionist policy across central Arabia, culmi-

nating in the Persian occupation of Yemen in 570 for some sixty years; but then, at the end, the sudden disintegration of the empire at the hands of first the Byzantines and then the Muslim Arabs.

This section of al-Ṭabarī's work is thus by no means exclusively concerned with the affairs of the Persian imperial heartland proper, the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, where the capital Seleucia-Ctesiphon lay, but is to a considerable extent concerned with its western and southwestern fringes; that is, the Roman/Byzantine provinces of eastern Anatolia and the Semitic Near East, including such ruling Arab families as the Lakhmids of al-Ḥīrah and the chiefs of Kindah of the family of Ḥujr Ākil al-Murār in central Arabia. Much of the material in al-Ṭabarī on the Sāsānids' external relations can be corroborated or amplified from outside contemporary or near-contemporary sources. For the warfare with the Romans/Byzantines, there is a rich array of Byzantine chroniclers, some of them, like Procopius, closely connected with the military commanders concerned or, like Agathias, with a special channel of communication for knowledge of Persian affairs. For the Arabian peninsula, there is a fair amount of Arabic information, admittedly post-Islamic in the form we know it, about the Lakhmid kings and the chiefs of Kindah, arising out of the Arabs' passion for genealogical information and its historical background and out of the need to elucidate the background of poetic activity at the court of al-Ḥīrah or in the person of a poet-chief like Imru' al-Qays. In his translation, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* (see on this, below), Nöldeke omitted some sections of al-Ṭabarī's material on pre-Islamic Yemen, since he considered it as "zu fabelhafte" (880¹⁷-882⁴, but with 881¹⁹-882⁴ inserted out of order in his translation at 147-48; 890⁴-892¹⁴; 901¹-917¹⁷). He also omitted as irrelevant to his general topic 966¹⁵-981², on the miraculous birth and early upbringing of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the closing section in this *Prima series*, vol. 2, 1069¹⁷-1072²⁰, on the chronology of the world from Adam to the Prophet's birth. With regard to the South Arabian material, during the 1870s, with little more secondary material available on the history of the pre-Islamic Arabs than A. P. Caussin de Perceval's attempt at making historical bricks without straw, his *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes avant l'Islamisme, pendant l'époque de Mahomet et jusqu'à la réduction de toutes les tribus*

sous la loi musulmane (Paris 1847-48), this must have seemed substantially the case. Only from the early 1870s, through the pioneer efforts of scholarly travelers like Halévy in copying inscriptions on the spot, with his subsequent decipherment of the script and then further elucidation of the material by D. H. Müller and others, did knowledge begin to emerge of the rich but patchy heritage of South Arabian inscriptions (and also, around this time, of inscriptions in other languages of the peninsula like Thamudic, Lihyanitic, Safaitic, etc.). Nöldeke was of course aware of the pioneer discoveries and publications here, but the material was still meager in quantity and philologically difficult to evaluate. During the course of the present century, the study of Epigraphic South Arabian has emerged as a fully grown branch of Semitic studies, and we now have confirmation—if at times in an allusive rather than direct manner—of several apparently “fabelhafte” events in al-Ṭabarī’s presentation of South Arabian history. Nor should one forget the significant quantity of material in Syriac and other languages of the Christian Orient that has now come to light and has illuminated the formation of an indigenous Christian church in Southwestern Arabia and such episodes as the struggle for political power and influence there involving such outside powers as Abyssinia, Byzantium, and Persia. Even the history of the lands beyond Persia’s northeastern frontier has had a certain amount of fresh illumination thrown upon it by recent work on the Western Turk empire and on the Kushans, Kidarites, and Hephthalites, utilizing the results of such disciplines as archaeology, numismatics, and epigraphy; and the emergence in the last decade of material from a family archive in what is now northern Afghanistan will almost certainly increase our knowledge of the history and language of Bactria, the later Islamic Ṭukhārīstān, in its pre-Islamic phase.

We have been talking about the peripheries of Persia, but there remains central to this section of al-Ṭabarī’s *History* the Persian and Mesopotamian core of the Sāsānid empire. The populations and resources of these territories, the firm social structure, the cohesive power within society of the Zoroastrian state church and its ethos, the richness of the irrigated lands of the Sawād of Iraq and the oases of the Iranian plateau, all these provided the motive power for Sāsānid expansionism and military success. For nearly

four centuries there was a perceptible trend of Sāsānid military success over the Romans/Byzantines: in the great battleground of Upper Mesopotamia, the Persian captured Nisibis in 363 and held it continuously thereafter as a bastion of Persian power threatening the Greeks, with the supreme success of final breakthrough in 614. Recently, James Howard-Johnston has perceptively weighed up the comparative positions and rôles of the two great empires of the Near and Middle East, concluding that it was above all the Persians' possession of Mesopotamia, with its populousness, its advanced, irrigated agriculture and its position at the head of the Persian Gulf with trade routes stretching thither from the East—all these advantages complementing the results of a similar exploitation of the oasis economies of the Iranian plateau—which gradually gave the Sāsānids the edge over Byzantium, enabling *inter alia* the emperors to use the threat of renewed military action to impose humiliating, tribute-paying conditions on the Greeks.¹

Unfortunately, our knowledge of whole stretches of Sāsānid internal history and of the mechanisms driving the empire remains very imperfect. Such basic topics as the nature of the social structure and the rôles of the aristocracy, gentry, priesthood, and merchants, and the nature of the landholding and financial system on which the state apparatus rested, continue to excite discussion and controversy among scholars. Sources of information like that from the rich corpus of Sāsānid royal and priestly inscriptions and reliefs, the testimony of coins and sealings, the material concerning subordinate faiths of the empire such as that from the conciliar acts of the Nestorian Church and from the Babylonian Talmud, have all been carefully sifted, but cannot compensate for the almost total absence of contemporary records and literature in Middle Persian; and the exact dating and provenance of such exiguous material as we do have, like the *Letter of Tansar* (see on this p. 17 n. 66, below) continue to be debated. Hence the continued, central importance of al-Ṭabarī's historical information on Sāsānid history, supplemented by equally valuable if scantier information in writers like Ibn Qutaybah, al-Ya'qūbī, al-Dīnawarī, al-Mas'ūdī, and Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī.

1. Howard-Johnston, "The Two Great Powers in Late Antiquity: A Comparison," 180-97.

It is undeniably true, as Howard-Johnston has again observed, that the version of Sāsānid history that reached al-Ṭabarī from one or other versions of the *Khwadāy-nāmag* or *Book of Kings*, probably from that translated into Arabic by the late Umayyad writer Ibn al-Muqaffa', almost certainly involved much distortion, suppression, and invention.² The penchant for entertaining anecdotes, memorable sayings, curiosia, moralizing tales, and the like, which seem to go back to the *Book of Kings's* Pahlavi original, was characteristic also of early Arabic *udabā'* or littérateurs. In his endeavor to produce a plausible, straightforward historical narrative, al-Ṭabarī must have tried valiantly to cut his way through a mass of entertaining but historically irrelevant information presented to him in these royal annals, but he could not entirely break free of the *adab* tradition (cf. his inclusion of the totally unhistorical story of Shābūr II's wandering disguised in the Roman camp and capture, p. 60 below, and the tale of Kawād I's escape from imprisonment at the end of the interregnum of Jām-āsp's rule, p. 135 below). Al-Ṭabarī's efforts at pruning less relevant material can be seen in the shortened Persian translation produced by Abū 'Alī Bal'amī (see on this, below), in which the Sāmānid vizier put back in his narrative certain items from the Sāsānid historical tradition where he thought al-Ṭabarī had pruned it overzealously. The fact that anecdotal material of the examples given above remained in al-Ṭabarī's *History* detracts only a little from confidence in his search for sober history.

There is nevertheless a certain unevenness of treatment, perhaps inevitable considering the material within al-Ṭabarī's hands. Sometimes confirmation or amplification of incidents in al-Ṭabarī's narrative can be found in, for example, the Greek, Syriac, or Armenian sources, but when the internal history of the Sāsānid empire did not impinge upon or affect the Christians of Persia, there was little reason for Eastern Christian sources to notice events there. Hence we are left with many blank or little-known periods in Sāsānid history, such as the reigns of Bahrām II in the later third century (covering seventeen years), of Bahrām IV at the end of the fourth century (eleven years) and of Yazdagird II in the

2. Ibid., 170-72.

mid fifth century (almost two decades), skated over by al-Ṭabarī (see pp. 46, 69, 106–109 below). For a crucial subject like Khusraw Anūsharwān's financial, tenurial, and military reforms, vital for our understanding of the internal dynamics of the later Sāsānid empire, we are still largely dependent on al-Ṭabarī's account; it is detailed and informative, but capable of varying interpretation, and hence has not surprisingly attracted a substantial body of comment and interpretation (see p. 258 n. 624, below). The same applies to the slightly earlier episode of Mazdak and his religiosocial movement in the reign of Kawād I and the earlier part of Anūsharwān's reign, which has given rise to widely varying interpretations, often not unconnected with the political and social views of the scholars concerned (see p. 132 n. 342, below).

We must be grateful to al-Ṭabarī for preserving as much as he did of hard historical material, among the less valuable episodes of his *History* that were meant more for entertainment than instruction. Writing a history of the Sāsānids without the Arabic chronicles, even though these last date from two or three centuries after the empire's demise, would be a daunting task.

II

The achievement of Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930) in producing in 1878 his *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden* and its stupendous commentary, was uniformly praised on its publication (save for one petulant French reviewer, although one recalls that this was only seven years after the French loss of Alsace-Lorraine to the German empire and that Nöldeke was at that moment sitting in Alsace in a professorial chair at Strassburg/Strasbourg University). In his extended review article of the work, Alfred von Gutschmid stated that Nöldeke's utilization of al-Ṭabarī had made it possible for the first time to write a real history of the Sāsānids.³ Succeeding generations of scholars—and not only orientalists but those from other disciplines like Byzantine studies—have continued to use Nöldeke's work and will doubtless continue to do so, when so

3. See F.-C. Muth, *Die Annalen von al-Ṭabarī im Spiegel der europäischen Bearbeitungen*, 57 and nn. 323–37.

much of the material he brought to bear on the elucidation and amplification of the Arabic text, that from the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Hebrew, Georgian, and Armenian sources (the latter via his Berlin colleague von Gutschmid), remains still valid. Nöldeke himself regarded his translation as perhaps his *chef d'oeuvre*.⁴ Nevertheless, a plethora of new information has emerged in the intervening 120 years, and this needs to be integrated with any new translation of the Arabic text. Today we live in an age of many specialists but not of polymaths like Nöldeke. How can any single person nowadays—not least the present *ʿabd ḥaqīr*—attempt to gather up and integrate all this new information? Thus as noted above, since Nöldeke's time, a whole new field within Semitic studies, that of Epigraphic South Arabian and South Arabian history, has emerged and matured. The obvious answer to the problem would be a team of experts collaborating on the project of a translation plus a commentary that would almost certainly exceed by many times the length of the translation itself. Such projects are easy to conceive but hard to finance and even harder to realize. The final volume of the *History of al-Ṭabarī* project cannot wait a further twenty years or so, which is what such a team of experts in different fields might well require (though Nöldeke finished his translation in one year!), and their finished product would almost inevitably be outdated in many respects before the end of the period of time involved. Hence the present work is offered now for readers' consideration as one which had to be completed within a period of two years only. The present translator and commentator is conscious of whole areas of new scholarship which should, in ideal conditions, be brought into consideration for the commentary; for instance, much exciting and relevant work is coming out of the Workshops on Late Antiquity and Early Islam, and this has been only partially tapped. But a halt must be called at some point, and I have reluctantly arrived at this; whether the achievement is worthwhile, the reader must judge for himself.

4. His view here was expressed in a letter to Goldziher, cited by F. Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, an Annotated Translation. I. General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood*, 144 n. 469.

The generations of Arabists who have used Nöldeke's *Geschichte* cannot have failed to be impressed by the degree of accuracy which he achieved in his translation.⁵ Where, as with so much of pre-Islamic poetry, replete as it is with recondite allusions, often totally unrecoverable today, doubt and uncertainty remained, he noted this. Since he actually published the translation a year before the appearance of the edited text (volume 1 of the *Prima Series*) on which it was based, a more complete understanding of the text led him on occasion to revise his translation (see, e.g., p. 65 n. 177 below). But such occasions were few and far between. What has happened since Nöldeke's time is that several Arabic texts that he had to use in manuscript, such as Ibn Qutaybah's *Uyūn al-akhbār*, al-Ya'qūbī's *Ta'rikh*, al-Dīnawarī's *al-Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, and various poetical *dīwāns*, have now been critically edited, and wherever possible, I have taken advantage of improved readings in these editions.

When the project for an edition of the *History* was first mooted in the early 1870s under the stimulus of the Leiden Arabist M. J. de Goeje,⁶ Nöldeke undertook to edit the section on the Sāsānids (*Prima series*, 813–1067) and, after the unexpected death of Otto Loth, the ensuing section 1067–1572; that is, up to almost the end of the events of A.H. 6. Basically, Nöldeke had at his disposal for the section on the Sāsānids the three manuscripts (1) L = Leiden 497, covering the whole period except for a lacuna at 878¹²–899¹⁷; (2) C = Constantinople/Istanbul, Köprülü 1040; and (3) T and t = Tübingen Ma. VI, 2 (Wetzstein Collection), with two parts, the second copied later than the first. Other manuscripts in part supplemented these, including P = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ancien fonds 627 (a manuscript cognate with L), from 899¹² (i.e., soon after the beginning of the reign of Khusraw I Anūsharwān); and BM = British Library, Add. 23,263, from 915⁹ (i.e., in the section on the Tubba' king of Yemen As'ad Abū Karib). Nöldeke also mentioned that he had found useful Ibn Hishām's version of Ibn

5. Cf. Irfan Shahīd, "Theodor Nöldeke's 'Geschichte der Perser und Araber,' an Evaluation," 119–21.

6. See on the project and its genesis, *Introductio*, pp. xxx–xxxv; J. W. Fück, *Die arabischen Studien in Europa bis in den Anfang des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 212–14; Muth, *Die Annalen von at-Ṭabarī*, 8–13; Rosenthal, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, an Annotated Translation*, I, 141–42.

Ishāq's *Sīrat al-nabī* (available in the printed edition of 1858–60 by F. Wüstenfeld); the anonymous history contained in the manuscript Sprenger 30 (in the collection acquired in 1858 from Sprenger by the Prussian State Library in Berlin, and still unpublished; it corresponds to one of the two main versions used by al-Ṭabarī for the history of the Sāsānids; see on the work the dissertation of J. G. Rothstein, *De chronographo arabo anonymo, qui codice Berolinensi Sprengiano tricesimo continetur*); and the Gotha manuscript 24–25 of Bal'amī's abbreviated, and in places slightly amplified, Persian translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* (H. Zotenberg's French translation was not published until 1867–74).⁷ The Cairo 1960–69 text of al-Ṭabarī's *History* by the veteran Egyptian editor Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, which incorporates some readings from Istanbul Topkapi Saray manuscripts and certain other ones, has been compared by the present translator with the Leiden text; the additional information gleaned has, however, proved negligible.

The rendering of Arabic names and terms follows the usual system of *The History of al-Ṭabarī*. In regard to Epigraphic South Arabian, I have endeavored to follow the generally acknowledged system as exemplified in A. F. L. Beeston's *Sabaic Grammar*. It is the rendering of pre-Islamic Iranian names and terms that causes difficulties, and no watertight system seems possible here. At the suggestion of Mr F. C. de Blois, for the spelling of Middle Persian words and names I have endeavored to follow the principles laid down by D. N. MacKenzie in his *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary* (cf. his exposition of the ambiguities and difficulties involved in handling the Pahlavi script, Introduction, pp. x–xv) and now generally accepted by specialists; namely, a strict distinction between *transliteration* of the consonantal script and *transcription* of the reconstructed Sāsānid pronunciation. For example, the name of the first Sāsānid ruler is transliterated 'rthštr but transcribed as Ardaxšīr. His father's name is transliterated p'pky but transcribed as Pābag. Ardaxšīr's son's name is spelled etymologically as šhp-whly (for *šāh* + *puhr*), and the contemporary Sāsānid pronunciation was Šābuhr, as we know from the Manichaean Middle Per-

7. See *Introductio*, pp. I–II, and for Bal'amī's translation specifically, Muth, *Die Annalen von al-Ṭabarī*, 20–27.

sian spelling *š'bwḥr*; although in the commentary to al-Ṭabarī's *History* I have used the later Middle Persian (and early New Persian) form for this last name of Shābūr, as being closer to the Arabic version of the name. A further slight anomaly is that I have used the later form Ardashīr rather than the strictly correct, earlier form Ardakhshīr, as again reflecting early New Persian usage and as being also the familiar Arabic equivalent.

Such institutions as the John Rylands University Library, Manchester; the Widener Library, Harvard University; and the Oriental Institute Library, Oxford, have aided completion of the work. Several colleagues have been helpful in making books available to me, providing xeroxes of articles difficult of access to me, sending offprints of their own articles, and giving information and guidance on various obscure or contested points. Thus I am grateful to Mr. Mohsen Ashtiany (Columbia University); Dr. S. P. Brock (Oxford University); Dr. Paul M. Cobb (Wake Forest University, N.C.); the Rev. Professor J. A. Emerton (Cambridge University); Dr. G. Greatrex (University of Wales, Cardiff); Dr. R. G. Hoyland (Oxford University); Dr. Ph. Huyse (Paris); Mr. M. C. A Macdonald (Oxford); Prof. D. N. MacKenzie (Anglesey); Dr. M. I. Mochiri (Paris); Professor Chr. Robin (CNRS, Aix-en-Provence); Professor N. Sims-Williams (SOAS, London); Professor G. Rex Smith (Manchester University); and Professor Edward Ullendorff (Oxford). My colleague in Manchester, Professor W. C. Brice, has drawn the maps in an expert fashion. In particular, Mr. F. C. de Blois (Royal Asiatic Society, London), with his special expertise in such fields as Iranian, South Arabian, and Syriac studies, has been kind enough to read through a draft of the commentary and to make a considerable number of corrections and valuable suggestions for improvement; some of these are explicitly acknowledged in the commentary, but there are many other, unacknowledged places where he has saved me from error or has enriched the documentation. Hence I am deeply grateful to him. But at the end, the usual confession must be made: responsibility for the final product remains my own.

C. Edmund Bosworth

Muhammad at Mecca
Volume VI
Translated and Annotated by
W. Montgomery Watt
and M. V. McDonald

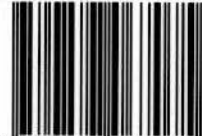
The sixth volume of the translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* deals with the ancestors of Muhammad, with his own early life, and then with his prophetic mission up to the time of his Hijrah or emigration to Medina. The topics covered mean that this volume is of great importance both for the career of Muhammad himself and for the early history of Islam. Al-Ṭabarī was familiar with, and made use of, the main early source of these matters, the *Sirab* or life of Muhammad by Ibn Ishāq, a work which is still extant. Although his own treatment is briefer than that of Ibn Ishāq, it complements the latter in important ways by making use of other sources. Where Ibn Ishāq gave only the version of an event which he preferred, al-Ṭabarī includes any variants which he considered of value. Thus he mentions the dispute about the first male to become a Muslim—'Ali or Abu Bakr or Zayd—and has also several variant accounts of the call to be a prophet. He has much material, too, about the hostility toward Muhammad from many of the leading Meccans and their attempts to put pressure on his family to stop his preaching. The negotiations with the men of Medina which eventually led to the Hijrah are fully described, and there is then an account of how Muhammad escaped an assassination attempt and arrived safely in Medina. A concluding section discusses some chronological questions. This volume does not merely give a straightforward account of the earlier career of Muhammad and the beginnings of Islam, but also contains valuable source-material not easily accessible otherwise, or not accessible at all.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME VI

Muḥammad at Mecca



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME VI

Muḥammad at Mecca

translated and annotated
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State University of New York Press

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of the non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muhammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥumayd–Salamah–Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less-common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually translated according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others which cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Translator's Foreword

The Sources and Their Reliability

The sources

In the latest and most complete history of Arabic literature by Fuat Sezgin, nearly fifty pages are devoted to works on the history of pre-Islamic Arabia and the life of the Prophet, solely for the period up to about the year 1000 A.D.¹

There are notices of over seventy writers, even if many of these are now known only through quotations from them by later authors. This gives some idea, however, of the large amount of written material available to Ṭabarī. For the present volume, he had three main sources.

The earliest and most important of those sources is Ibn Ishāq, whose book on the Prophet is usually known as the *Sīrah*. This has been preserved primarily in the recension of a later scholar, Ibn Hishām (d.218/833).² It is known, however, that there were at least fifteen recensions of Ibn Ishāq's work by various pupils of his, and there is a little information about how these differed from that of Ibn Hishām.³ Ibn Hishām derived his version mainly from Ziyād b. 'Abdallāh al-Bakkā'ī (d.183/299). Ṭabarī, on the other hand, knew Ibn Ishāq through the recension of Salamah b. al-Fadl al-Abrash

1. *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* (GAS), vol. I, Leiden 1967, pp. 257-302.

2. Ed. Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, Göttingen 1858, 1859. For other editions and further details about Ibn Hishām, see Sezgin, I:297-99.

3. J. Fück, *Muhammed b. Ishāq*, Frankfurt 1925.

(d.191/206), which was transmitted to him by Ibn Ḥumayd, but he also sometimes consulted the recension of Yūnus b. Bukayr (d.199/214). The *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq is accessible to English readers in the translation of Alfred Guillaume.⁴ Guillaume aimed at re-constituting the text of Ibn Ishāq as far as it still exists. He took out of the main text the notes and editorial comments of Ibn Hishām (of whom he had a poor opinion) and placed these in an Appendix. Then he incorporated into his main text the passages omitted by Ibn Hishām which he was able to recover mainly from Ṭabarī, though there are also one or two from other sources.⁵

Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Yasār was born in al-Madīnah about 85/704. His grandfather Yasār, who had been held as a prisoner by the Persian emperor, was captured by the Muslims at 'Ayn al-Tamr in Iraq in 12/633 and sent to al-Madīnah as a slave. On professing Islam, he was manumitted. His sons Ishāq and Mūsā became scholars with special knowledge of the anecdotes about the Prophet and the early history of Islam. Occasionally, Ibn Ishāq gives his father as the source for a piece of information. In 119/737, when he was over thirty, he went to Alexandria to study under Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb. He seems to have returned to al-Madīnah after a year or two, but had to go away again, probably because of the hostility of the jurist Mālik b. Anas (though there are some discrepancies in the accounts). He then taught for several years in a number of places, including al-Kūfah, al-Baṣrah, and al-Rayy, before settling in Baghdad. His move to Baghdad can hardly have been before 146/763, since it was only about that year that the Caliph, al-Manṣūr, and his administration took up residence in their new city. Ibn Ishāq died there, probably in 151/768.

Ibn Ishāq's great work was the *Sīrah* of the Prophet, though there are reports and fragments of other works. The *Sīrah* as a whole may have been called *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* (The Book of the Expeditions), but the name is also used for the third part dealing with Muḥammad's career from the hijrah to his death. The first part was *al-Mubtada'* (The Beginning), and went from the creation of the world through stories of early prophets to accounts of South Arabian affairs up to the time of the Prophet. The second part,

4. *The Life of Muhammad: a Translation of (Ibn) Ishāq's "Sīrat Rasūl Allāh,"* translated by A. Guillaume, London 1955.

5. Op.cit., xxxi-xxxiii.

al-Mab'ath (The Sending, sc. of the Prophet), covered the period from Muḥammad's birth until his arrival in al-Madīnah.

The earlier section of *al-Mubtada'* was omitted by Ibn Hishām, though fragments of it are found in other authors. He retained a genealogy of Muḥammad back to Adam, but then passed immediately to the Arab descendants of Ishmael (Ismā'īl) through 'Adnān, with a reference to the parallel line through Qaḥṭān. A number of stories then follow about the kings of South Arabia, but not much of this material is relevant to Mecca and Yathrib (as al-Madīnah was then called). The story of the expedition of the Elephant, however, is told in some detail. This was an expedition against Mecca led by Abrahah, the Abyssinian viceroy, or ruler, of the Yemen, which included a fighting elephant to terrify the Arab tribesmen. In Sūrah 105 of the Qur'ān, the failure of the expedition is attributed to God. Muḥammad is reported to have been born in "the year of the elephant," which is usually taken to be the year A.D. 570.

In the second part of the *Sīrah*, events are given a rough dating according to Muḥammad's age. Ibn Hishām has omitted some anecdotes (1161f.; 1171-73) which present 'Alī as playing an important role in the earliest days of Islam (and so were felt to be pro-Shī'ite), and also the story of the "satanic verses" (1192-95), which was perhaps thought to be slightly discreditable to the Prophet. Ibn Hishām may well have omitted more passages of which we are unaware, since Ṭabarī does not report many of the minor topics found in Ibn Ishāq.

The great reputation of Ibn Ishāq as a biographer of the Prophet is due to his wide knowledge of the relevant material, to his wise judgement in selecting the more reliable accounts of events, and to his ability to form the whole into a single connected narrative. Criticisms of him by later Muslim scholars are not of his work as a historian but of his collection of Ḥadīth (anecdotes about Muḥammad's sayings and doings to be used for legal purposes). Ibn Ishāq usually gives a source for his historical material, though not always with a complete *isnād* or chain of transmitters. In the case of some major events he names several sources which he has used, but does not specify the source or sources of each detail of the account.

Ṭabarī clearly regarded Ibn Ishāq very highly, and in many parts

of his narrative uses him as his main source, while inserting variant accounts from other sources. Where Ibn Hishām omitted passages from Ibn Ishāq which he thought unduly favorable to Shī'ism (as noted above), Ṭabarī retained such passages but balanced them by other material. Thus, where Ibn Ishāq only had material showing that 'Alī was the first male Muslim, Ṭabarī added other sources which claimed that honor for Abū Bakr or Zayd b. Hārithah.

In the section dealing with Muḥammad's ancestry Ibn Ishāq follows a chronological order, but, as already noted, introduces many incidents from South Arabian history which have little relevance to the Prophet's ancestors. It has been suggested that attention was paid to South Arabia because this was a matter of pride for the Muslims of al-Madīnah, who regarded themselves as descended from the South Arabian or Yemenite tribes, whereas the Muslims of Mecca, who by Ibn Ishāq's time held most of the power in the Islamic state, belonged to the northern Arabs. Ṭabarī includes some of the South Arabian material from Ibn Ishāq at an earlier point in his narrative.⁶ When he comes to Muḥammad's ancestors, he reverses the chronological order; he begins with Muḥammad's father, then goes to his grandfather, then to his great-grandfather, and so on. The difference between the two historians may be seen from the following table:

<i>Ancestors</i>	<i>Ibn Ishāq</i>	<i>Ṭabarī</i>
Adam to 'Adnān	3	III3-23
'Adnān, Ma'add	3-7	III1-13
Nizār	49	III1
Muḍar, Ilyās	50	II08-10
Mudrikah to Lu'ayy	60-62	II01-8
Ka'b to Quṣayy	67-68	I092-II01
'Abd Manāf	68, 84	I091-92
Hāshim	87	I088-91
'Abd al-Muṭṭalib	88	I082-88
'Abdallāh,		
Muḥammad's conception	98-101	I074-82

A second important source is Muḥammad b. 'Umar (as Ṭabarī

6. This will be found in the previous volume of the present translation.

usually calls him), generally known as al-Wāqidī.⁷ Al-Wāqidī was born in al-Madīnah in 150/747, and studied under the scholars there, notably Mūsā b. 'Uqbah, Ma'mar b. Rāshid and Abū Ma'shar.⁸ In 180/796 he went to Baghdad, obtained the support of the wazīr Yaḥyā b. Khālīd al-Barmakī, and was appointed by the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd as judge for the east side of Baghdad; later he had other similar posts. He died in Baghdad in 207/823. His most important work is the *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, which deals with the "expeditions" of Muḥammad, and thus covers most of the events of the period between the hijrah and Muḥammad's death. There are many references to this in the next two volumes of the present translation of Ṭabarī's history. Al-Wāqidī paid special attention to chronology, and his dating of the expeditions in general is superior to that of Ibn Ishāq and to be accepted. He must have known the work of Ibn Ishāq, but does not make use of it in his *Maghāzī*, though he uses it for earlier and later matters. He was also regarded as an authority on the early Islamic conquests, but was not so highly thought of in respect of pre-Islamic history. Some of the historical material he collected has been preserved not in his own works but in those of his pupil Ibn Sa'd. There is now an excellent text of the *Maghāzī* edited by Marsden Jones. Previously scholars had to rely on the accurate summary of the work in German by Julius Wellhausen entitled *Muhammed in Medina*.

Muḥammad b. Sa'd was born in al-Baṣrah in 168/784, but moved to al-Madīnah and other centers of learning. It was presumably in Baghdad that he studied under al-Wāqidī. Though he had studied under other scholars, including Hishām b. al-Kalbī, he became specially attached to al-Wāqidī and was known as his *kātib* or secretary. He died in Baghdad in 230/845. Virtually his only extant work is the *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr* (The Great Book of Classes).⁹ The "classes" are the various generations of those who transmitted anecdotes, historical or legal, about Muḥammad. The first "class" consists of the Companions (*Ṣaḥābah*), those who had known and conversed with Muḥammad. Thus there are bio-

7. Sezgin, I:294-97; the notices of his three teachers are on pp. 286, 290, and 291.

8. *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, ed. Marsden Jones, 3 vols., London 1966; *Muhammed in Medina*, abbreviated German translation by J. Wellhausen, Berlin 1882.

9. Sezgin, GAS, I:300f.

graphical notices of all the 300-odd men who had taken part in the battle of Badr. Altogether Ibn Sa'd has notices of some 4,250 persons, including about 600 women, though some of the notices in the later "classes" are sketchy, occasionally only a name. The *Ṭabaqāt* proper are preceded by a collection of information about the earlier part of Muḥammad's life, but the *Maghāzī* are not dealt with in detail, presumably because of the existence of al-Wāqidī's book, though there are accounts of tribal deputations and texts of treaties not found in al-Wāqidī. The material relevant to the period up to the hijrah is found in the first half of the first volume of the European edition. Ṭabarī quotes the *Ṭabaqāt* from al-Ḥārith b. Abī Usāmah (d. 282/895).

A third important source is Ibn al-Kalbī, or more fully, Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sā'ib al-Kalbī.¹⁰ His father Muḥammad (d.146/763) was already an authority on pre-Islamic Arabia, and the son added to his store of knowledge. He was born in al-Kūfah about 120/737, and died there in 204/819. Ṭabarī's normal description of this source is: Hishām b. Muḥammad from his father. They were regarded as the chief authorities on Arab genealogy and many other aspects of the pre-Islamic history of Arabia. Two books relevant to the life of Muḥammad by the philologist Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d.245/860), *al-Muḥabbar* and *al-Munammaq*, rely heavily on Ibn al-Kalbī.¹¹

It may also be noted that from one of his minor sources Ṭabarī reproduces an early document, a letter from the scholar 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr to 'Abd al-Malik (Caliph from 685 to 705).¹² 'Urwah was a son of al-Zubayr, who along with Ṭalhah was defeated by 'Alī at the Battle of the Camel in 35/656. His brother 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, some thirty years his senior, set himself up as counter-Caliph in Mecca from 61/80 to 73/692. Though 'Urwah had supported his brother in Mecca against the Umayyads, he managed to have good relations with the Umayyad 'Abd al-Malik. He was reckoned to have a wide knowledge of early Islamic history, and some of this has been transmitted by later scholars such as Muḥammad b. Shihāb al-Zuhri (d.124/742) and Abū al-

10. Ibid., 268-71.

11. C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, (GAL)² Leiden 1943, I:105 (106).

12. See 118of., 1284-88 below.

Aswad al-Asadī (d.131/748).¹³ Al-Zuhri was one of the teachers of Ibn Ishāq.

The reliability of the materials used

For a century or so, some Western scholars have been sceptical about the historical value of much of the material about the career of Muḥammad. This scepticism may be said to have reached its culmination in two works published in 1977. One was a book on the Qur'ān by John Wansbrough, in which he maintained that the text of the Qur'ān did not attain its present form until a century and a half after Muḥammad.¹⁴ The other book was by two pupils of Wansbrough's who attempted to show that all the early Muslim sources for the life of Muḥammad were to be rejected, and that the earliest phase of his religion was not Islam as it is now known but something different which they called "Hagarism".¹⁵ Neither book has been favorably received by scholars in general, since both are based on many unjustified assumptions, and there seems little point in offering a detailed criticism of them. Nevertheless, since they allege that the entire contents of this and the two or three following volumes of Ṭabarī's history are without historical value, it seems worth while to give some arguments to justify the belief that most of the materials used by Ṭabarī are reliable. A form of these arguments has already been published under the title "The Reliability of Ibn Ishāq's Sources",¹⁶ and since Ibn Ishāq was Ṭabarī's main source, they will also apply to Ṭabarī. It will be useful, however, to show more particularly how this is so.

One of the earliest exponents of sceptical views was Ignaz Goldziher, who in 1890, in the second volume of his *Muhammedanische Studien*, suggested that much of what was contained in the vast collections of Ḥadīth was not historically

13. Sezgin, I:280-83, 284f.

14. *Quranic Studies, Sources and Methods of Scriptural Interpretation*, London 1977.

15. Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism, the Making of the Islamic World*, Cambridge 1977.

16. In *La vie du prophète Mahomet* (Colloque de Strasbourg, 1980), Paris 1983, pp.31-43; see also Watt. "The Materials used by Ibn Ishāq," in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. B. Lewis and P.M. Holt, London 1962, pp.23-34.

true.¹⁷ This line of thought was further elaborated by Joseph Schacht in *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*.¹⁸ The corpus of Ḥadīth is primarily concerned with legal and liturgical matters, and to a lesser extent with theological concerns, but other scholars expressed similar criticisms of the more purely historical material. The leaders among them were Henri Lammens and Carl Heinrich Becker, and their views were widely accepted up to a point. Becker expressed his conclusions by saying that the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq consisted primarily of "the already existing dogmatic and juristic Ḥadīth ... collected and chronologically arranged," and he held that to these had been added expanded versions of historical allusions in the Qur'ān.¹⁹ Following Lammens and Becker, Régis Blachère argued that the only reliable source for the life of Muḥammad was the Qur'ān itself.²⁰

One serious defect of the Lammens-Becker view is that it does not explain where the chronology comes from. Ḥadīth do not normally give an indication of chronology, and there are no "chronological" Ḥadīth. Thus Ḥadīth cannot be used to arrange Ḥadīth chronologically. The other serious defect is that "the already existing dogmatic and juristic Ḥadīth," even if they are true, have no importance for the historian of Muḥammad's career. They do not convey the sort of information which the historian requires. It is plausible to suppose that "anecdotes about what Muḥammad said and did" must be at the heart of his biography, but this is not so with those in the corpus of Ḥadīth. A saying which is of dogmatic or juristic interest is usually irrelevant to the historian. Thus there is a well-known story about how Muḥammad passed a man beating a slave and told him not to do so because "God made Adam in his (the slave's) image." This is dogmatically important, since it replaces the usual Jewish and Christian interpretation of the phrase "God made Adam in His image" as being God's image—a phrase which, in other Ḥadīth, Muḥammad is said to have uttered. For the historian, however, this story is of no importance.

It is essential to realize that, though originally there may have

17. Halle 1890; English translation edited by S.M. Stern, *Muslim Studies* London 1971.

18. Oxford 1950.

19. C.H. Becker, *Islamstudien*, Leipzig 1924, I:520f. (reprinted from *Der Islam*, IV [1913]: 263ff.)

20. *Le problème de Mahomet*, Paris 1952.

been some overlap between the study of Ḥadīth and the study of the *Sīrah*, the two studies soon became distinct disciplines with different methodologies. This is made obvious by a glance at Arent Jan Wensinck's *Handbook of Early Muhammadan Tradition*.²¹ At the beginning of the work he lists the titles—about four hundred in all—of the separate “books” or sections in eight standard collections of Ḥadīth. Most of these books deal with legal or liturgical matters such as “marriage” or “ablutions.” A few deal with dogmatic questions under such headings as “faith” (*īmān*) and “predestination” (*qadar*). Only three “books” could be regarded as historical, two in the collection of al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) entitled “expeditions” (*maghāzī*) and “the merits of the Companions” (*faḍā'il al-ṣaḥābah*), and one in the collection of Muslim (d. 261/875) with the latter title. Bukhārī's “book” on the “expeditions” is lengthy, but the difference between his methodology and that of the historians can be illustrated from his first paragraph. He quotes both a Companion and a later scholar as saying that the first expedition in which Muḥammad took part personally was that of al-'Ushayrah, but then he gives the statement of Ibn Ishāq that Muḥammad had taken part in two expeditions before that of al-'Ushayrah.²² Bukhārī thought it worthwhile retaining the assertion of the Companion and the later scholar, although it seems to be valueless after that of Ibn Ishāq. Historians like Ibn Ishāq, on the other hand, did not repeat assertions they held to be clearly mistaken. When Ṭabarī gives alternative views, as he sometimes does, it is probably because he is not sure which is correct. The conclusion to which these considerations lead is that the critique of Ḥadīth by Goldziher, Schacht, and others does not necessarily apply to the materials used in the *Sīrah*. Most of these materials may be brought under four headings: a chronological framework and outline of events, anecdotes other than Ḥadīth, Qur'ānic elaborations, and poetry.

The first type of material consists of a basic chronological framework and an outline of the main events. This applies particularly to the period after the hijrah where the framework is the chronological order of the expeditions and is accompanied by brief account of what happened in each. (A word will be said later

21. Leiden 1927.

22. Cf. Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 415f., 421f., Ṭabarī, I:1269-71.

about the chronology of the period before the hijrah.) Ibn Ishāq usually introduces each expedition with a description of it in his own words, without naming any source. Thus for the first expedition in which Muḥammad participated he says

Then he went out raiding in Ṣafar (August) at the beginning of the twelfth month from his arrival in al-Madīnah, and proceeded as far as Waddān. This is the expedition of al-Abwā' against Quraysh and Banū Ḍamrah,...during which Banū Ḍamrah made an agreement with him through their chief Makhshī b. 'Amr. Then the Messenger of God returned to al-Madīnah without meeting hostile action, and remained there for the rest of Ṣafar and the first part of Rabi' I (September).²³

This account raises the question: What was the source of Ibn Ishāq's information, and why does he not name a source? The answer is almost certainly that these were matters of widespread and generally accepted common knowledge, and a little reflection will show how this came to be so. At the time Muḥammad died, all Muslims of long standing and many more recent Muslims presumably knew the order of the main events since the hijrah, namely: the battle of Badr, the battle of Uhūd, the siege of al-Madīnah, the expedition of al-Ḥudaybiyah, the conquest of Khaybar, the conquest of Mecca, the battle of Ḥunayn, and the expedition to Tābūk. Those who had taken part in some of the other expeditions presumably knew more or less how these fitted into the basic framework, because Arab society was primarily an oral and not a literate society. This common knowledge would be carefully treasured. As the Islamic state expanded into a more literate world, literacy must have grown. There are grounds for thinking that a few men had begun to write down something of the early history within about thirty years of Muḥammad's death, perhaps even before then. Fuat Sezgin's list of early historians has already been mentioned; and it is noteworthy that of those dealing with the *Sīrah*, the first two were born a year or two after the hijrah, and the next four within ten years of Muḥammad's death;

23. Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 415f. As Guillaume assumes, the statement that Sa'd b. 'Ubadah was left in charge of al-Madīnah is probably from Ibn Hishām, though it is not indicated as such in the text.

and these men appear to have left written reports. They may, even before they were twenty years old, have heard informal lectures or talks in the mosques about the early days of Islam; there certainly were such lectures on the history of pre-Islamic times. If by the time they were twenty they were interested in studying the subject, there would be great numbers of older men whom they could ask about points they found obscure.

Of the scholars described above, 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr would reach the age of twenty about 46/665 and al-Zuhri about 71/690. These dates are important for comparative purposes. A person aged eighty today (1987) probably remembers something of the beginning of the First World War in 1914, perhaps also of the sinking of the "Titanic" in 1911, and of the order of the two events; and these happened over seventy years ago. Such a person would have heard parents and elders talking about events twenty or thirty years earlier still. If we apply this consideration to early Islam, then 'Urwah could certainly have spoken to a number of men who had lived through the events of the first ten years after the hijrah, and even al-Zuhri might have met one or two. Moreover, 'Urwah and al-Zuhri by the time they were twenty would already have learnt something of the *Sīrah* from older scholars, so that their work was not the construction of a chronological framework but the refining of one that already existed. Thus when Ibn Ishāq gives a statement about an expedition such as the one quoted, he will have learnt most of it from al-Zuhri and his other teachers, and it will represent the distillate of the work of several generations of scholars. It cannot be attributed to a single source, since it is the result of many scholars sifting masses of evidence from dozens or even hundreds of informants. The final result of this process is what is meant by "the basic chronological framework and outline of events", and the bulk of it must have been accepted by all scholars, though some might have had fuller knowledge than others of certain parts, and there might have been divergencies on minor matters. For the period after the hijrah, Ṭabarī has the chronology of both Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī to follow, and he also notes where they differ, as in respect of some of the earlier expeditions.

For the period between Muḥammad's birth and the hijrah, there is only a meager chronological framework. Doubtless this was because there were fewer outstanding events and fewer people capa-

ble of giving information by the time the scholars were beginning to ask questions. Some dating is provided by Muḥammad's age: the war of the Fijār took place when he was twenty, his marriage to Khadījah when he was twenty-five, the rebuilding of the Ka'bah when he was thirty-five, and the beginning of his prophethood when he was forty or forty-three. The fact that these are multiples of five suggests that they are only approximations. For the period after the call to be a prophet, there is virtually no attempt to give dates, though the order is probably correct in the case of such events as the emigration to Abyssinia and the boycott of the clan of Hāshim. Ṭabarī sometimes introduces an event by a brief statement in his own words—presumably saying what is generally accepted—before going on to quote sources. An example of this is in his introduction to the rebuilding of the Ka'bah (1130) where he notes that it happened ten years after Muḥammad's marriage to Khadījah; he then quotes Ibn Ishāq as saying that it was when Muḥammad was thirty-five, and he follows with a longer account also from Ibn Ishāq.

The importance of genealogy for the Arabs will be further discussed below, but it may be noted here that it provided a rough chronological structure for pre-Islamic events, as can be seen in the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq. Ṭabarī disregards genealogy in this respect, since he treats Muḥammad's ancestors in reverse order, and in the previous volume, he mixed in a few events in Arabian history with the accounts of the Persian kings.

A second type of historical material is provided by anecdotes other than Ḥadīth. It would be only natural that families would remember with pride the exploits of their older members in the battles of Badr and Uhūd and similar events. A notable example is the story of a man called Qatādah b. al-Nu'mān, who was beside Muḥammad in the battle of Uhūd when he was wounded. When Muḥammad's bow broke, Qatādah picked it up and kept it. At the same time, his own eye was partly pulled out, but Muḥammad replaced it and in later life Qatādah declared that this eye was better than the other.²⁴ This is the sort of anecdote which would be treasured within a family, especially if the bow had become a family heirloom. It is in fact recorded by Qatādah's grandson, 'Āṣim b.

24. Ṭabarī, pp. i, 1414, from Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, 573f.

ʿUmar b. Qatādah (d.120/737), who was a student of the *Sīrah* and produced some written works.²⁵ The story may well have been touched up in the course of transmission; for example, the wound to the eye may have been less serious than the description suggests, but Qatādah may well have claimed that he saw better with it. The story tells us nothing about the course of the battle, except that at one point Muḥammad used a bow, but Ibn Ishāq may have included it because it seemed to show that Muḥammad had unusual healing powers.

Joseph Schacht regarded what he called a "family *isnād*" as an invention to give an appearance of authenticity to Ḥadīth where there was no proper *isnād*.²⁶ This may well be so in legal Ḥadīth where there is no question of family pride, but there seems to be no reason why it should apply to historical anecdotes, especially when these were of incidents which a family took pride in remembering. An example from the present volume is found in the long accounts from Abū Bakr's daughters of how Muḥammad told Abū Bakr that the time for his hijrah had come and how they arranged things.²⁷ These accounts are fitted into the narrative of the hijrah and the events leading up to it, which belong to the basic framework. This is in part a family *isnād*, since ʿĀʾishah, from whom ʿUrwah heard the story, was his maternal aunt, while her sister Asmāʾ was his mother. When ʿĀʾishah died in 58/678 ʿUrwah was over thirty, so that he may have heard the story from her many times. Whether such anecdotes about minor incidents come with a family *isnād* or some other form, they cannot be rejected out of hand. Each, however, should be considered on its merits and examined for inherent improbabilities and the presence of distorting motives. Many of these anecdotes, however, appear to be genuine, and they may serve a useful purpose in adding flesh to the basic framework.

The third type of material is the text itself of the Qurʾān, together with expansions of it. When C. H. Becker spoke of "exegetical elaborations of Qurʾānic allusions," he presumably meant chiefly what Muslim scholars know as "occasions of revelation" (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), that is, accounts of the particular occasion on

25. Sezgin, I:279f.

26. *Origins*, 170.

27. Ṭabarī, pp. 1237-41.

which a certain passage was revealed. Thus Sūrah 80 begins with the words "He frowned and turned away, because the blind man came to him," and the occasion of this is said to have been that Muḥammad was talking to one or two important Meccan merchants (who are named), trying to convince them of the truth of Islam, when a blind man, already a believer, came and asked some questions. The blind man was Ibn Umm Maktūm, who came from a good family and was later adjudged a suitable person to be left in charge of al-Madīnah once or twice when Muḥammad was absent on an expedition. This incident must have happened in the earlier part of Muḥammad's prophethood at Mecca, but no date is assigned, and Ṭabarī neglects the story in his history. As historical material, the "occasions of revelation" are in a similar position to the anecdotes just considered; they are possibly true, but each must be examined separately. An example may be given from Ṭabarī where the alleged "occasion" has to be rejected.²⁸ In a passage where he speaks in his own person, he states that Muḥammad received permission for himself and the Muslims to fight the pagans by the revelation of the verse: "Fight them until there is no more *fitnah* (persecution), and the religion is God's alone" (Qur'ān 8:39). This appears to have been just before the Muslims from al-Madīnah took the Pledge of War at the pilgrimage of 622 A.D. The dating of passages of the Qur'ān is notoriously difficult, but this verse occurs in a group of verses which were almost certainly revealed after the battle of Badr.²⁹ This means that the Pledge of War and the impending hijrah cannot have been the "occasion" for its revelation.

Ibn Ishāq quotes many verses from the Qur'ān in respect of important events like the battles of Badr and Uḥud, also paraphrasing and otherwise expanding them; but Ṭabarī is sparing in such quotations, and indeed there are hardly any which are relevant to the period before the hijrah, apart from some which speak of the character of Muḥammad's prophethood, which is not really a matter for a history such as the present. Any use of the Qur'ān for historical purposes necessarily presupposes the chronological framework of events, so that verses with a clear historical refer-

28. I:1227; See also 1225, where the emphasis is on *fitnah*.

29. The almost identical verse 2:193 seems to have been revealed shortly before the conquest of Mecca.

ence can be fitted into that. Most of the information to be derived from the Qur'ān concerns not the outward shape of events but the attitudes of the participants. Apart from this, however, much can be learnt from the Qur'ān about various aspects of the background of the events described by the historians.³⁰

Not much need be said about a fourth type of material, the poetry. There has been much discussion, from the days of Ibn Hishām down to modern times, of the authenticity of the poetry quoted by Ibn Ishāq and Ṭabarī.³¹ A proportion of the poetry would seem to be by the persons to whom it is attributed, but by no means all. The poetry, like the Qur'ān, does not tell us much about the outward events, but it gives some insight into people's feelings and attitudes, including the attitudes of a tribe or clan toward its rivals. Even when poems are not by the authors to whom they are ascribed, the information they give about attitudes may still be accurate.

This review of the types of material used by historians like Ibn Ishāq and Ṭabarī points to the conclusion that their presentation of the career of Muḥammad and the early history of the Islamic state is largely sound. The historians are, of course, subject to various limitations imposed by the general intellectual outlook of their time, as well as by personal idiosyncrasies, and for these, allowance must be made. To suggest, however, that the whole corpus of material found in the historians was invented several generations after the events is ludicrous when one becomes aware of the vastness of this corpus. Thus besides the biographical notices of the more important Companions of Muḥammad found in Ibn Sa'd, there are later biographical dictionaries of Companions by Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233) and al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) which contain something like 10,000 names with longer or shorter biographical notices. Naturally in all this plethora of material there are differences and discrepancies, but it is amazing how much of it fits together in an interlocking whole. The problem facing scholars today is how to use all this material critically and creatively so

30. Some of this background information has been collected in Watt, *The Meccan Prophet in the Qur'ān*, Edinburgh 1987.

31. See Guillaume, *Life of Muhammad*, Introduction, xxv-xxx; W. Arafat, "Early Critics of the Authenticity of the Poetry of the Sira," in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxi (1958):453-63.

as to gain an understanding of the beginnings of Islam which will be relevant to the needs of Muslims in the twenty-first century

Comment on the Events

The present volume of the translation of al-Ṭabarī's history is the first of four dealing with the life of Muḥammad. In this volume al-Ṭabarī first describes the ancestors of Muḥammad, and then the main events in his life until his Hijrah or emigration to Medina in 622. The following comments deal with the chief points and issues involved.

Genealogy

The first section of this volume (pp.1073-1123 of the Leiden text) deals with the ancestry of Muḥammad. Where Ibn Ishāq deals with the individual men more or less in chronological order, Ṭabarī reverses this and works backwards from Muḥammad's father to his grandfather, then to his great-grandfather and so on.³²

Genealogy played an important part in the cultural tradition of the Arabs. It was the basic structure which was then clothed with stories and memories, or, to vary the metaphor, it was the skeleton for which particular events and incidents provided the flesh. Thus, for the Arabs of the period round about 600 A.D., genealogy was the heart of their traditional lore. Every individual wanted to be sure that the tribe of which he was a member was an honorable one, and its honor was bound up with the great names in its past. Maintaining the honor of the tribe was a deep spring of action among the Arabs of the desert.

Abū Bakr, Muḥammad's chief lieutenant, was an expert genealogist, and this probably meant that he also had a thorough knowledge of the internal politics of the various tribes. Genealogy continued to be studied by the early Muslim scholars, and they collected material from all available sources. What had been oral tradition was set down in writing. The matter was naturally complicated, since groups often made conflicting claims about their ancestry. By about the year 800, largely due to the work of Ibn al-Kalbī, the genealogical system had been established in a way

32. See the table on p. xiv above.

that satisfied most people. On points of detail, of course, there were still many disagreements and uncertainties. Western scholars of the late nineteenth century were inclined to think that some parts of this genealogical system had been manipulated in order to justify alliances between tribes which developed in parts of the Umayyad empire during the first Islamic century. There may be some truth in this at one or two points, but scholarly opinion now tends to think that the standard system is, broadly speaking, a true reflection of genealogical facts.

According to this system, the existing Arab tribes are descended from two distinct ancestors, 'Adnān and Qaḥṭān. The descendants of 'Adnān are spoken of as northern Arabs, and those of Qaḥṭān as southern Arabs or Yemenites.³³ The southern Arabs had at one time lived as a settled population in the Yemen, but as the result of a great disaster they had had to give up settled life and had taken to the desert; many had moved northwards.³⁴ In Arabian tradition the disaster is spoken of as the breaking of the dam of Ma'rib, and is mentioned in the Qur'ān (34:16). Remains of the great dam are still extant, and inscriptions have been found recording breakings in the middle of the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. It is now thought, however, that the breaking of the dam, which really means a breakdown of the irrigation system, was not the cause but rather the effect of a general decline of the civilization of South Arabia owing to economic and social factors.³⁵

With Arab interest in genealogy being strong, it was natural that attempts should be made to link the traditional Arab system with the genealogies in the Bible, especially since the Qur'ān had associated Abraham and Ishmael with Mecca. The Biblical genealogies are found as follows: *Genesis* 5, Adam to Noah; *Genesis* 10:1-11:26, descendants of Noah; *Genesis* 25:12-16, descendants of Ishmael; 1 *Chronicles* 1:1-31, Adam to the sons of Ishmael. The Muslim scholars held 'Adnān to be a descendant of Ishmael either through his son Nābit (Nebaioth) or through his son Qaydhar (Kedar). Qaḥṭān is sometimes held to be descended from Ishmael, but is usually identified with Joktan son of Eber and Noah's

33. The best short account is in *EI*, s.v. 'Arab (Djazirat al-), sect. vi.

34. There is a reference to this on p. 1132 (Leiden); see also n. 68 to the text.

35. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, London 1960, p. 64f.

great-great-great-grandson.³⁶ At some points Ṭabarī admits that these genealogies have been taken from "the people of the first Book," but most Muslim scholars disliked admitting borrowings from Jews and Christians and omitted any mention of the ultimate source. The Hebrew names are mostly recognizable in Arabic despite the fact that they may not have been taken directly from Hebrew but through either Syriac or Greek.

The early history of Mecca

In the course of his description of Muḥammad's ancestors, Ṭabarī gives some stories and other material relevant to the early history of Mecca. It is not known when the Ka'bah was first regarded as sacred. The earliest statement with even a modicum of historical value is that the tribe of Jurhum exercised some sort of control over the Ka'bah, presumably benefiting in some way from the visits of pilgrims. Jurhum probably had no houses but lived in tents, and were not necessarily at Mecca throughout the year. The statement (on p. 1131) that Ishmael married a woman of Jurhum seems to be no more than an attempt to fill the gap between Ishmael and Jurhum. Ṭabarī tells (1132) how the control of the Ka'bah passed from Jurhum to Khuzā'ah after the latter had come from the Yemen; and this suggests a date in the fifth or sixth century A.D., and it seems unlikely that Jurhum would have been in control for more than a century of two. Ishmael, on the other hand, is now dated by scholars at about 1800 B.C., so that the gap between him and Jurhum is considerable. Muslim scholars thought that Jurhum had completely disappeared, but there are one or two traces of it in the early Islamic period.

In his account of Quṣayy (1092-99) Ṭabarī tells how Khuzā'ah in their turn were deprived of control of the Ka'bah by Quṣayy and his allies. This was the real founding of the town of Mecca, since Quṣayy brought his supporters and settled them in the area round the Ka'bah, presumably in permanent dwellings. In the "valley" or torrent-bed (*baḥā'*) immediately round the Ka'bah, he gave land to the more important groups of supporters, and these became known as Quraysh al-Biṭāḥ, while less important groups, Quraysh al-Zawāhir, were at a greater distance. These supporting

36. *Genesis* 10:25-30; *I Chronicles* 1:19-23.

groups were probably related to Quṣayy, but possibly not so precisely as the standard genealogy suggests (of which an abbreviated version is given below).

Though the name Quraysh is sometimes given to an ancestor, either Fihṛ or al-Nadr, in its origin it seems to have been a nickname which was given to the supporters of Quṣayy as a whole, perhaps meaning "the little collection," though other meanings were suggested by later scholars (as the text shows). Associated with control of the Ka'bah were various offices or privileges, doubtless intended to ensure that things went smoothly during the time of pilgrimage. Among the offices mentioned in Ṭabari's material were: the *siqāyah* or ensuring of a water supply, especially for the pilgrims; the *riḥādah* or seeing that there was food for the pilgrims; the *liwā'*, which was either carrying the standard in battle or arranging for this; and the *nasī'* or arranging when a month was to be intercalated.³⁷

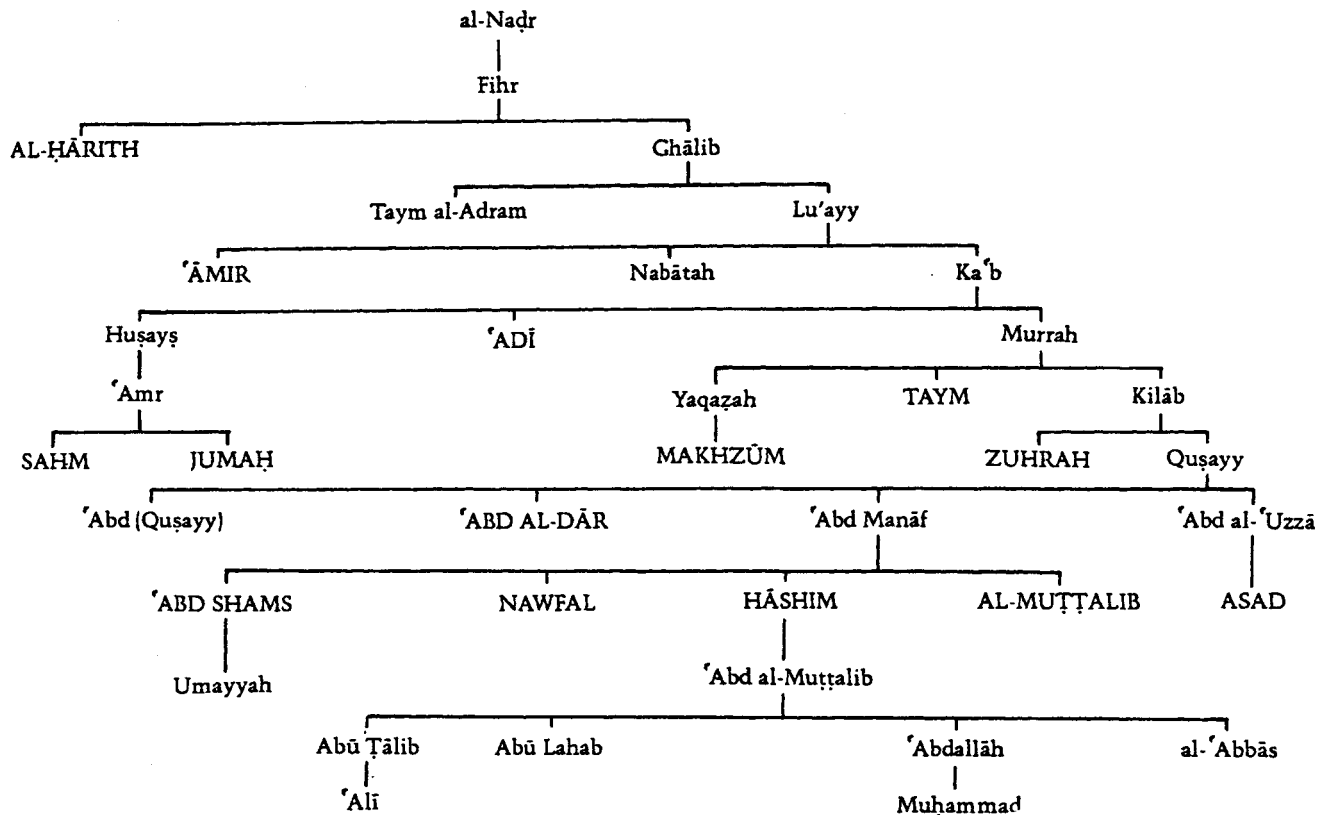
The existence of the sanctuary and the habit of pilgrimage gave Mecca some advantages for commerce. In the later sixth century, possibly because of the warfare between the Byzantine and Persian empires, the merchants of Mecca seem to have gained something like monopoly control over the trade between South Arabia (and the Indian Ocean?) and the Mediterranean coast, and they had become very prosperous. There were two or three rival groups, but commercial interests made them work together. Though most Meccans shared in the prosperity, some fared very much better than others, and there was growing social malaise as the wealthy came to disregard aspects of traditional morality. Islam may be said to have developed as an answer to the problems resulting from Meccan commercial prosperity.

Events up to Muḥammad's call (1123-39)

The story of Muḥammad's encounter with the Christian monk Baḥīrā, like some of the other stories about Muḥammad in this volume, is to be regarded as primarily a way of reassuring people that Muḥammad was really a prophet. After the Arabs had conquered Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, they were in contact with Christians who used various arguments to show that Muḥammad was not

37. See n. 71 to the text.

The Clans of Quraysh.
(Names in capitals are those of groups commonly spoken of as clans.)



a prophet; for example, that he had performed no miracles, and that his coming had not been foretold. It is almost certain that Muḥammad travelled more than once with Abū Ṭālib and others to Gaza and Damascus, and he may well have had some contacts with Christian monks; but the details of the story must be treated as hagiography.

Muḥammad's marriage to Khadijah was a turning point in his career. The system of inheritance customary among the Arabs at this time allowed only mature persons to inherit, and thus Muḥammad received nothing from either his father or his grandfather. This meant that he was unable to engage in trading on his own account as most of his relatives did. It is not known what social arrangements made it possible for Khadijah to be a merchant in her own right, though at least one other woman merchant is mentioned in the sources. After the marriage Muḥammad continued to trade with Khadijah's capital, though presumably now as her partner rather than as her agent. We are told that he had as a business associate al-Sā'ib b. Abī al-Sā'ib of the clan of Makhzūm, a nephew of Khadijah's second husband. These arrangements made it possible for Muḥammad to make some use of his administrative skills, but Khadijah seems to have been only moderately wealthy and Muḥammad was probably still excluded from the most lucrative enterprises.

It appears that Khadijah also appreciated the qualities in Muḥammad which made it possible for him to be a prophet, and after some of his earliest prophetic experiences, when he was uncertain what to make of these and anxious about the future, her encouragement and support helped him to overcome his difficulties. She had a cousin, Waraqah b. Nawfal, who is said to have become a Christian, and she may have learnt something about Christianity from him. Waraqah, when talking to Khadijah about Muḥammad, is reported to have identified Muḥammad's experiences with those of Moses in the Bible. It is doubtful whether Waraqah ever spoke to Muḥammad about this, but his ideas may have been conveyed by Khadijah, for in the end Muḥammad was convinced that he was continuing the line of Biblical prophets.

The story of Muḥammad's part in the rebuilding of the Ka'bah is probably intended to show that he was a person of high character before his call to be a prophet. There may be some truth in

the story, in that many of the merchants may have realized that Muḥammad was unusually skilled in handling difficult personal situations.

The call to be prophet

It will be convenient to treat under a single heading all the matters covered in pages 1139-57, since they are closely interconnected, besides being the most important part of the present volume. The historian can hardly avoid asking what light this material throws on the origins of a religion professed by perhaps a seventh of the world's population.

It is necessary first of all to say something about religious attitudes in Mecca at the time, and in particular to call attention to a feature which was overlooked in my book *Muḥammad at Mecca*. This is the existence in Mecca of a belief in Allāh as a "high god," that is, as one god among many, though in some respects superior to the others.³⁸ The fact is clearly stated in two passages of the Qur'ān and referred to in several others.

If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, and made the sun and moon subservient, they will certainly say, Allāh. . . . And if you ask them who sent down water from heaven and thereby revived the earth after its death, they will certainly say, Allāh. . . . And when they sail on the ship they pray to Allāh as sole object of devotion, but when he has brought them safe to land they "associate" (*yushrikūn*) others with him (29:61-65).

If you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say, Allāh. Say: Do you then consider that what you call upon apart from Allāh, those (female beings), are able, if God wills evil to me, to remove this evil, or, if he wills mercy for me, to hold back this mercy (39:38)?

This last passage is possibly a reference to the belief that the other deities intercede with Allāh on behalf of their worshippers, a belief which is clearly stated in 10:18: "they serve apart from Allāh what neither harms nor benefits them, and they say, These

38. See Watt, "Belief in a 'high god' in pre-Islamic Mecca," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, xvi (1971): 35-40; "The Qur'ān and Belief in a 'High God,'" *Der Islam*, lvi (1979): 205-11. See also n. 4 to the text.

are our intercessors (*shufa'ā'*) with Allāh."³⁹ Once it is admitted that there was this belief in Allāh as a "high god," it will be found that there are many other passages of the Qur'ān, descriptive of pagans, in which it may be implicit.

While it is clear that such beliefs were widespread among Muḥammad's contemporaries, it is impossible to know what proportion of the people held them. Similar beliefs are known to have been held throughout the Semitic Near East during the Graeco-Roman period.⁴⁰ Something of the kind is also to be found in the Bible, for according to recent interpreters, *Psalm* 16:2f. runs as follows:

To Yahweh you say, "My Lord, you are my fortune, nothing else but you," yet to these pagan deities in the land, "My princes, all my pleasure is in you."⁴¹

Muḥammad must have been aware of this belief in Allāh as a "high god" even if he did not fully share in it. There is no way of discovering how much he knew about Judaism and Christianity before his revelations began. He presumably knew all that was commonly known in Mecca, and he may have discussed religious matters with Christians on his visits to Syria. Khadijah, too, may have known something about Christianity through her cousin Waraqah who is said to have been a Christian. The word Allāh, however, was presumably used by Jews and Christians when speaking about God in Arabic, and this must have made it difficult for serious-minded people in Mecca to understand how Allāh as worshipped by Jews and Christians differed from Allāh as worshipped by their pagan contemporaries.

Relevant to this matter is a significant point which does not seem to have been noticed by Western scholars, namely, that the word Allāh does not occur in the earliest passages of the Qur'ān, or does so only rarely. The relative dating of the Qur'ān is, of course, a notoriously difficult matter about which Western scholars are not agreed, while few Muslims accept the Western approach to chronology. The absence of the word Allāh in early sūrahs can be

39. See also 36:23 and 43:86.

40. See J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God: Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East*, Princeton 1977.

41. Jerusalem Bible.

illustrated from the latest attempt to place the sūrahs in chronological order, that of Régis Blachère in his French translation.⁴² In what he reckons to be the first seventeen sūrahs, the word Allāh occurs only three times, namely, in his seventh (91:13), his tenth (95:8) and his sixteenth (87:7); and of these, he considers the verses 91:13 and 87:7 to be later than the rest of the sūrah. Instead of Allāh, one finds "your Lord" (rabbuka) as in 96:1,3 or "we" as in 94:14. The word Allāh occurs, of course, in the invocation at the beginning of each sūrah, but this would be added later.

The story of the "satanic verses" (1192-96) shows the persistence of some confusion between Allāh conceived monotheistically and Allāh as "high god." The truth of the story cannot be doubted, since it is inconceivable that any Muslim would invent such a story, and it is inconceivable that a Muslim scholar would accept such a story from a non-Muslim. It also appears to be vouched for by a verse from the Qur'ān (22:52). Many Muslims reject the story as unworthy of Muḥammad, but there is nothing unworthy of him in holding that his knowledge and understanding of "his Lord" developed during the early years of his prophethood as the revelations multiplied.

The core of the story is that one day Muḥammad received a revelation (as he supposed) in which three goddesses were mentioned and permission was given to use them as intercessors. He communicated this to the leading men of Quraysh, and they all joined with him in Islamic worship. Later he realized that the verses permitting intercession were not from God but must have been put into his mind by Satan. When the change was communicated to Quraysh, their opposition became even fiercer. Some versions state that the realization of the falsity of the supposed revelation came to Muḥammad on the evening of the same day, but this is unlikely if one accepts the further story about some Emigrants returning from Abyssinia. There would thus appear to have been an interval between the "revelation" of the verses and their cancellation.

The point to be emphasized here is that Muḥammad did not immediately appreciate that there was a contradiction between this permission for intercession and a genuine monotheism. This does

42. First edition, Paris 1949.

not necessarily mean that he accepted the idea of the believers in Allāh as "high god" that there were other deities which could intercede with him. Some of those who heard the verses might certainly have understood them in this way, but Muḥammad himself probably thought of the three goddesses as angels. It is to be noted that verse 26 of the same sūrah speaks of the possibility of intercession by angels: "How many angels there are in the heavens whose intercession is of no avail save after God gives leave to those whom he chooses and accepts!" The full story of the rejection of the "satanic verses" will never be known. What is certain is that a fresh revelation cancelled them and replaced them by others. It is from this time, too, that the revelations emphasize that "there is no deity but God" and that he must be the sole object of worship.⁴³ Even the possibility that the goddesses might be angels is rejected: "they are but names which you have named, you and your fathers" (53:23). Thus, in the end, the Qur'ān decisively rejected the belief in Allāh as "high god," but it is part of the background against which the accounts of Muḥammad's call must be considered.

There is much to be said for accepting the statement of 'Ā'ishah that first beginning of revelation for the Messenger of God was true vision (*al-ru'yā al-sādiqah*); it used to come upon him like the dawn".⁴⁴ It seems very probable that this refers to the two visions described in Sūrah 53:1-8:

By the Star when it sets,
 your comrade neither errs nor is deceived,
 nor does he speak from (his own) fancy.
 It is naught but a revelation revealed,
 which one of mighty powers taught him,
 a vigorous one; he grew clear to view
 while being on the uppermost horizon.
 Then he drew near and came down
 till he was (distant) two bows' length or nearer
 and revealed to his slave what he revealed.
 The heart lied not (in seeing) what it saw.

43. Emphasis on the unicity of God is not found in the early passages of the Qur'ān; see Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 60-85.

44. P. 1147.

Will you dispute with him concerning what he sees?

Indeed he saw him yet another time
by the lote tree of the utmost boundary,
near which is the Garden of Abode,
when the lote tree was strangely shrouded.
The eye turned not aside nor yet was overbold.
He saw one of the greatest signs of his Lord.

In Islamic tradition, the second vision is often identified with the "night journey," of which more will be said later. This is unlikely, however, since the vision of 53:13-18 appears to be very early, whereas the "night journey" is generally held to come late in the Meccan period. The words here translated "reveal" and "revelation" (*awhā*, *waḥy*) are those which became the standard terms for these concepts, but in this passage they are used in a more general sense, which could perhaps be rendered by "suggested" or "indicated", and of which there are several examples in the Qur'ān.⁴⁵ This means that these visions were not the beginning of the verbal revelations which constitute the Qur'ān. It should also be noted that the word "slave" (*'abd*) in verse 10 implies that the object seen was a divine being and not an angel, since "slave" would be inappropriate in the latter case. When, after the hijrah, it came to be the accepted view that the angel Gabriel was the agent of revelation, he was taken to be the object of the visions; but many of the early commentators allow that it was a vision of God. It may be, however, that Muḥammad thought of him only as "his Lord" and not as Allāh.

The text of Ṭabarī (1245-50) shows that there were two strong bodies of opinion about Muḥammad's age when he was called to be a prophet, one maintaining that he was forty, the other that he was forty-three. It would seem probable that there is some truth underlying both views, and that they refer to two stages in his becoming aware of himself as a prophet. The problem then becomes how to distinguish between the full prophethood from the age of forty-three onwards and what happened in the previous three years. There are two main possibilities. One is that the revelation of the Qur'ān began soon after the visions but that he did not pro-

45. Watt, *Bell's Introduction to the Qur'ān*, 20-23.

claim the revelations publicly until after three years. The other is that during the three years he was not receiving verbal revelations (or at least not until near the end), but that he had some other kind of religious experience. This second possibility may be connected with the statement that during the three years his visitant was the angel Isrāfil (1248f.). This would mean that during these years Muḥammad was coming to a deeper understanding of religious truth and working out a system of religious practice, such as the details of the formal prayer. The statement that these were demonstrated to him by Gabriel (1156f.) is unlikely to be a description of the original experience, since Gabriel does not seem to have played any part in Muḥammad's thinking until after the hijrah. The statement would be more plausible if Isrāfil was substituted for Gabriel; but on the whole, it is likely that Isrāfil was brought in by a later Muslim scholar. Nevertheless, it would be true that Muḥammad must have had religious experiences through which he learnt such matters as the details of the formal prayer, and he may have done so only gradually. Since the details of the prayer are not prescribed in the Qur'ān, they must have come to Muḥammad through some form of nonverbal inspirational experience. This tends to support the second of the two possibilities, namely, that for most of the three-year period Muḥammad was not receiving Qur'ānic revelations but was having experiences of another kind.

There is not much of clear historical value in the remaining material about the call to prophethood. The story of the revelation by Gabriel of the first part of Sūrah 96 cannot be accepted as it stands, since there are strong grounds for holding that it was only after the hijrah that Muḥammad came to think of Gabriel as the agent of revelation. The receiving of passages of the Qur'ān does not seem to have been accompanied by any visual experience, and so it is possible that Muḥammad thought that it was "his Lord" himself who was putting the Qur'ān into his heart. Interpreted in this way, the story may be essentially true, at least in those versions in which the words *mā aqra'u* are taken to mean "what shall I recite?" At some point a Muslim scholar realized that these words could also mean "I do not recite" or "do not read." By this time, in order to counter Christian claims that Muḥammad had taken stories from the Bible, it had become a point of Muslim

apologetic that Muḥammad was unable to read; and so the story of the first revelation was sometimes modified to support this line of apologetic. Such modifications are certainly not original.

Even if the central point of the story is accepted, the question has still to be asked whether the beginning of Sūrah 96 was in fact the first revelation. Some nineteenth-century scholars, like Sir William Muir and Hubert Grimme, thought that several sūrahs had been revealed before this passage. It can also be argued that it would be easy for a later Muslim scholar to think that a sūrah beginning "recite" (*iqra'*) must have been the beginning of a book called "recitation" (*qur'ān* - the verbal noun from the same root), and then to invent a story to substantiate this. On the other hand, when the core of the story is accepted, it does sound like a new beginning.

The contents of the passage, however, seem to show that it cannot have been the first revealed. The words "your Lord... taught by the pen, taught man what he did not know" are almost certainly a reference to previous scriptures, that is, to the Bible. This is not meant to suggest that Muḥammad had himself read any of the Bible, for it is unlikely that it had been translated into Arabic, and doubtful if anyone in Mecca had a copy of it in any language. The point is that Muḥammad had had two visions and other strange experiences, and sometimes was not sure what to make of them. He needed to be assured by someone with the requisite knowledge that what he had experienced was similar to what had been experienced by the prophets of the Bible. There are many discrepancies in the versions of the story about Waraqah, but the central point is the assurance to Muḥammad that what had come to him was the great Nāmūs which had come to Moses (115If.). Western scholars have tended to identify the Nāmūs with the Mosaic law because of the resemblance to the Greek *nomos* (law). The identification with Gabriel is impossible for the reason given above, but suggests that Waraqah may have been saying that the "Lord" of Muḥammad's experience was God who had come to Moses. Certainly throughout his prophetic career Muḥammad never doubted that he and the Jews and the Christians were all alike worshippers of God. So, in a sense, it was because of what "his Lord" had taught by the pen to men like Waraqah that Muḥammad was able to have the assurance that he

stood within a great prophetic tradition. This does not prove that there had been verbal revelations to Muḥammad before Sūrah 96, but it makes it not unlikely that there had been some. If this were so, then the *iqra'* of 96:1 could be a command to recite revealed passages as part of the formal prayer, and in this respect would mark a new beginning.

Early in the material from al-Zuhri on page 1147 there occur the words, "the Truth (that is, God) came to him unexpectedly and said, Muḥammad, you are the Messenger of God", and "he" repeated the words shortly afterwards in Khadijah's chamber. A line or two later the same words are spoken to Muḥammad by Gabriel, and on page 1155, Gabriel comes to him after the "gap" in the revelation and says "you are the Prophet of God." The name of Gabriel cannot be original here, since he belongs to the period after the hijrah. If there is a genuine experience underlying the story, it is to be found in the version which speaks of "the Truth," for this could be identified with Muḥammad's "Lord" and the divine being of the visions.

Further, if through this experience Muḥammad came to some understanding of his vocation, it could not have been by means of the term "Messenger of God" (*rasūl Allāh*). Apart from the fact that he seems to have been uncertain whether to think of "his Lord" as identical with Allāh, the term *rasūl* would probably not have had much meaning for him at this period. He certainly came to believe that he had a divinely given vocation, but he would have thought of it in other terms. In the earliest passages of the Qur'ān, he is told to warn or to admonish, and is then spoken of as a "warner" (*nadhīr*) or "admonisher" (*mudhakkir*).⁴⁶

Some Muslim scholars held that the first passage of the Qur'ān to be revealed was the beginning of Sūrah 74: "O you enveloped in a cloak, Rise and warn." Others held that this was not the first of all revelations but was the one marking the beginning of public preaching. The words "rise and warn" certainly imply communicating the message to people in general; but then they could not be the first of all revelations unless there were none for communication only to believers.

The idea that Muḥammad thought of committing suicide must

46. E.g., 74:2 and 87:9 (commands). See also *Muhammad at Mecca*, 71f.

have come originally from himself, though it may not have been so definite as it appears to be in the stories, but was perhaps rather a mood of dejection and despair. Sūrah 93 (*al-Ḍuḥā*) gives encouragement to Muḥammad to rise above such a mood. The reason for such depression could be perplexity at the strange experiences through which he was passing and uncertainty whether to accept them at their face value. After Muḥammad had received a number of revelations, there was a period known as the "gap" (*fa-trah*) when none came to him; and this also he found worrying. It should be remembered, too, that there was a widespread feeling among Semitic peoples that the near approach of the divine could have disastrous consequences for the individual, and so was to be feared. To be covered with a cloak seems to have been regarded as offering some protection against the danger. This is the most likely explanation of the description of Muḥammad as "enveloped or enwrapped in a cloak" in the opening verses of Sūrahs 73 and 74. The words *muzzammil* and *muddaththir* are similar in meaning as well as in form. It is possible that the stories in which Muḥammad asks to be covered were invented to explain the two words.

Close examination, then, of the material presented by Ṭabarī about Muḥammad's call to be a prophet shows that much of it has little historical value. This should not, however, obscure the fact that most of the main points in the presentation as a whole are almost certainly true. Muḥammad had meditated deeply on the social, moral, and religious problems of Mecca. He had two visions which moved him profoundly and other religious experiences. He became convinced first that God had called him to be a "warner" to his community, then later that he had called him to be not just a prophet, but a prophet in the line of the biblical prophets. He began to receive messages or revelations from God, and these continued to come to him at short intervals. He communicated these to other people, and those who believed them came to form a religious community.

The night journey (1157-59)

Popular Islamic tradition has greatly elaborated and expanded the story of Muḥammad's "night journey" and ascent to heaven (*isrā'*, *mi'rāj*). There is much more to it than the brief account

given by Ṭabarī. In many versions, Muḥammad is first of all carried from Mecca to Jerusalem. and then from Jerusalem taken up to the seventh heaven. It is claimed that these are fuller descriptions of what is briefly referred to in the Qur'ān (17:1):

Glorified be he who carried his servant by night from the Inviolable Mosque to the Furthest Mosque, whose neighborhood we have blessed, that we might show him our signs.

This presumably refers to a dream or something similar, and is far from justifying the plethora of material about the "night journey" of Muḥammad.⁴⁷

The first Muslims (1159-69)

The material on the question of who was the first male to become a Muslim is not so much history as political propaganda. For Shī'ites, the assertion that "'Alī was the first male Muslim is an additional mark of his superiority to Abū Bakr and further support for his claim to be the rightful successor of Muḥammad as caliph. 'Alī may well have been the first male to accept Islam and join in the prayer; but he was only ten at that time. The assertion that Abū Bakr was first is doubtless a Sunnite claim that he was best fitted to succeed Muḥammad; though he became Muḥammad's chief lieutenant, he was not necessarily his best friend at the time of his call, and, if not, probably not the first Muslim. The statement that fifty accepted Islam before him but that he was the best Muslim looks like a Sunnite admission that he was not first. Zayd b. Hārithah, as a member of Muḥammad's household, may well have been the first adult male.

The opposition to Muḥammad in Mecca (1169-99)

It was probably a year or two after the beginning of Muḥammad's public preaching that he and his followers came to experience serious opposition from the leading merchants of Mecca. Some older Western scholars thought that the reason for the opposition was that the leading merchants considered that Muḥammad's attack on idols would put an end to the sacredness of the Ka'bah and of Mecca generally. This idea is without founda-

47. There is much more material in Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah* 263-71; see also *EI(S)*, art. Mi'rādī (Horowitz).

tion. There is no record of Muḥammad doing other than respecting the sacredness of the Ka'bah and of Mecca. Though the Qur'ānic attack on idols would apply to the idol Hubal who was kept in the sacred area round the Ka'bah, the men of Quraysh are called upon (Sūrah 106:3) to worship "the Lord of this House"; and this last phrase implies that for Muslims the Ka'bah is a temple of the one true God, and therefore eminently sacred. Since the three goddesses of the "satanic verses" had each a shrine not far from Mecca, at al-Ṭā'if, Nakhlah, and al-Mushallal, respectively, the cancellation of the verses would mean primarily that worship at these shrines was no longer permitted, but would not affect the status of the Ka'bah. There is nothing here to suggest that the pilgrimage would be adversely affected and trade destroyed.

The reasons for the Meccan opposition are to be sought rather in the main themes found in the earlier passages of the Qur'ān. In *Muhammad at Mecca*, pages 60–85, the passages were carefully examined and the main themes shown to be: God's goodness and power, the return to God for Judgement, the requirement that men should respond by gratitude and worship, and also by being generous with their wealth and "purifying" themselves. The requirement of generosity implied a critique of the merchants' unscrupulous pursuit of profit and their disregard of traditional obligations to kinsmen. The call to men to believe in God, to be grateful to Him, and to worship Him went counter to the firm conviction of the merchants that their own economic and political powers were the ultimate determinant of events. The merchants probably also felt that Muḥammad was threatening their political control of Meccan affairs. He was collecting round him devoted followers, and if this process continued and his followers became a sizeable proportion of the people of Mecca, it would be difficult for the merchant's council to go against rulings given by Muḥammad.

Credence should also be given to the statement in the letter of 'Urwah to the caliph 'Abd al-Malik (p.1180) that Quraysh were not wholly averse to Muḥammad "until he mentioned their idols" and that then wealthy Quraysh from al-Ṭā'if took the lead in stirring up opposition to him. The "mention of idols" probably means the cancellation of the "satanic verses"; and it is conceivable that Meccans from al-Ṭā'if led the opposition because the rejection of the shrine of the goddess Allāt there somehow adversely affected

their business interests. The "mention of the idols," however, was doubtless no more than the occasion for the development of oppressive measures, since the worship of the idols probably meant little to the materialistic merchants. The basic reasons for their opposition were the Qur'ānic critique of their attitudes and practices, and the threat to themselves from Muḥammad's increasing power. It was possibly also relevant to the growth of opposition that Muḥammad's followers were largely young men, some of them sons and younger brothers of the leading merchants.

The various ways in which life was made difficult for Muḥammad and the Muslims are illustrated in the pages of Ṭabarī. There was economic pressure on individuals, and finally on the whole clan of Hāshim. There were insulting words and actions. There were repressive measures involving physical coercion. The last happened within the clan or even family, since peace was maintained in Mecca, as elsewhere in Arabia, by the *lex talionis*, (law of retaliation). Each individual was normally "protected" by his clan in the sense that, if he were to be injured, honor would demand that his clan should exact "an eye for an eye," and so on. Muḥammad himself suffered little other than petty annoyances because his uncle Abū Ṭālib, as chief of Hāshim, refused to withdraw clan protection from him despite attempts of the opponents to entice or threaten him into changing his mind — he was not himself a Muslim.

When the level of prosecution became intolerable for some of the Muslims, Muḥammad encouraged them to emigrate to Abyssinia, a country with which Mecca had trading relations. The primary motive was to escape from persecution, but there may also have been secondary motives of various kinds, perhaps even the hope that the Christian emperor (or Negus) might become a Muslim. Two separate emigrations are sometimes spoken of, but this seems to be an unjustified deduction from the fact that Ibn Ishāq has two separate lists. It is also said that some of the Emigrants came back when they heard that after the "satanic verses" the leading Meccans had joined Muḥammad in the prayer; they did not hear of the cancellation until they were near Mecca, but they then returned to Abyssinia. What seems likely is that there was a succession of small groups rather than two emigrations of large parties. Not all the Muslims in Mecca emigrated. Those who

did nearly all belonged to a specific group of clans, and this was doubtless because these clans were more vigorous in persecuting their own members. Some of the Emigrants returned to Mecca before the hijrah, but others remained in Abyssinia until six years after that event, presumably making a good living as traders.

The culmination of the attempts of the opponents to deprive Muḥammad of the "protection" of his clan was an agreement by most of the clans of Mecca not to trade with the clan of Hāshim (and its associated clan of al-Muṭṭalib) and not to intermarry. This "boycott" is said to have lasted for about three years. It does not seem to have caused undue hardship to Hāshim, possibly because they were not dependent on the boycotting clans for the importing of food. Some of these clans eventually broke the boycott, perhaps feeling that they were losing more from it than they were gaining.

It was probably in the year 619 A.D. that the boycott ended, and shortly afterwards Muḥammad lost by death both his wife Khadijah and the uncle who had protected him, Abū Ṭālib. Abū Ṭālib was succeeded as chief of Hāshim by another uncle Abū Lahab, and the latter soon found an opportunity of depriving Muḥammad of clan protection without loss of face; the reason given is said to have been that Muḥammad had alleged their common ancestor 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to be in Hell.

The final years at Mecca and the Hijrah (1199-1245)

Soon after these events Muḥammad made a journey to al-Ṭā'if, doubtless because he had lost, or was about to lose, his "protection" in Mecca. He may have hoped to find some support for his religion there, because al-Ṭā'if, a trade rival of Mecca, had been forcibly brought under the control of its stronger neighbor. When he reached al-Ṭā'if, however, he found no one ready to support him and stand up for him, and he suffered badly at the hands of some of the local population. Before he returned to Mecca he had to obtain the "protection" of some man of importance. Two requests were rejected, but the third man he approached, the head of the clan of Nawfal, gave a positive answer, though he probably imposed conditions, such as not preaching, of which we are not informed.

The impossibility of spreading Islam further in Mecca made Muḥammad look for potential followers elsewhere. He ap-

proached some of the nomadic tribes when they were at Mecca for the annual pilgrimage, but found no response. Then, probably in 620, he met half a dozen men from al-Madīnah and was listened to with interest. Unlike Mecca, where there was no agriculture, al-Madīnah was an oasis growing dates and cereals; but for a long period it had been plagued with feuds of increasing intensity between rival clans and groups of clans. Most recently, at the battle of Bu'āth about 617, nearly all the clans of al-Madīnah had been involved on one side or the other. Peace had been restored but it was still fragile, and many people in al-Madīnah were attracted by the prospect of having someone with an authority such as Muḥammad's, who might be able to settle their disputes.

A more representative group of twelve came to the pilgrimage of 621 and took the first pledge of al-'Aqabah, which was tantamount to accepting Islam. Muḥammad sent an agent to al-Madīnah with them, ostensibly to teach them Islam, but probably also to gain detailed information about political trends in al-Madīnah and to avoid a repetition of the fiasco at al-Ṭā'if. A year later, at the pilgrimage of 622, over seventy men and one or two women made the second pledge of al-'Aqabah, the pledge of war, by which they not only accepted Islam but also undertook to "protect" Muḥammad in al-Madīnah as they would one of their nearest kinsmen.

This pledge made it possible for Muḥammad and the community of Muslims to "emigrate" to al-Madīnah. Muḥammad encouraged those who wanted to go to make the journey in small groups. After about two months, over seventy men with their wives and families had reached al-Madīnah. Some Muslims chose to remain in Mecca, but it is difficult to know how many. The leading opponents apparently had some awareness of what was happening, and realized that it could create problems for themselves, though, despite some of their alleged remarks, they could hardly have anticipated the precise nature of their problems. There may well have been a plot to kill Muḥammad of the kind described by Ṭabarī.

So long as he remained in Mecca Muḥammad was presumably still under the "protection" of the clan of Nawfal. On leaving Mecca, however, he would have no "protection" until he reached al-Madīnah. This was the reason for the secrecy of his departure,

for his hiding in the cave, and then following an unusual route to al-Madinah. His precautions were effective, and he reached al-Madinah safely on 24 September 622.

Questions of chronology (1245-56)

The various statements about the length of Muḥammad's prophetic career in Mecca support the view adopted above that there were two points, about three years apart, at each of which an important step forward was taken. The second was almost certainly the beginning of the public proclamation of the message. The first is not so clear, but was probably not the beginning of verbal revelation, that is, of the Qur'ān. If, as some of the sources seem to indicate, the period of public preaching at Mecca was ten years, then it must have begun about 612, and the earlier stage about 609; but these dates are admittedly only approximate.

The establishment of the Islamic era was almost certainly the work of the caliph 'Umar (634-44). The matter could hardly have been of concern to Muḥammad while the Islamic polity was still at the embryonic stage. The distinctive character of the Islamic year, of course, was fixed shortly before Muḥammad's death by the Qur'ānic rejection of intercalation.⁴⁸ The choice of the hijrah for the beginning of the Islamic era was doubtless made because it was the effective beginning of the Islamic state, and for the practical reason that there was little chronological material before the hijrah and a large amount afterwards.

The Islamic era was fixed to begin with the first month of the Arab year during which Muḥammad made the hijrah, and it was decided, by working backwards, that Muḥarram 1, A.H. 1 was equivalent to July 16, A.D. 622. This was based, however, on the assumption that no intercalary months were observed after the hijrah, though it is unlikely that this was so. This may explain why the sources say that Muḥammad arrived in al-Madinah on a Monday, whereas according to the standard calendar the day was a Friday.

W. Montgomery Watt

48. Qur'ān 9:36f. See also n. 74 to the text.

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Translated by M. V. McDonald

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THE HISTORY OF AL-TABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME VII

The Foundation of the Community

MUHAMMAD AT AL-MADINA

A.D. 622-626/HIJRAH-4 A.H.



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(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME VII

**The Foundation of
The Community**

translated and annotated
by

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some

degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes

as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Translator's Foreword



This volume deals with the history of the Islamic community at Medina between the Hijrah and the end of year 4 A.H. This was a time of critical importance both for Islam as a religion and for the political community in which it was embodied. Muḥammad and those Meccan Muslims who chose to accompany him (the Emigrants) took up their residence in Medina on the basis of the agreement known as the Constitution of Medina. The document of this name preserved by Ibn Hishām is probably of a later date but appears to incorporate the essential provisions of the original agreement.¹ It was an agreement to form a federation for mutual support between the "clan" of Emigrants with Muḥammad as their chief and eight clans of Medina. The federation was conceived on traditional Arab lines; however, because the nine clans were Muslims and Muḥammad was recognized as Messenger of God, it was in effect an Islamic polity, even though it contained Jewish groups as secondary members. Muḥammad had no special political authority, but it was stated that serious disputes were to be referred to him. Since this body politic was a new venture for all concerned and details of organization would be somewhat fluid, many decisions must have been taken in these early years;

1. IH, 341-4; see also Watt, *Medina*, 221-8, text and discussion; further discussion and analysis by R.B. Serjeant in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xli (1978), 1-42.

but al-Ṭabarī gives only a few glimpses of such matters, presumably because there were no specific datable events connected with them.

The first Friday prayer (1256–8) (pages 1256–8 of the Leiden edition)

It was important not only to make political arrangements for the community of Muslims but also to establish its religious observances. The unanimous testimony of the sources is that Muḥammad and the Muslims at Mecca did not make anything special of the Friday midday prayer before the Hijrah. However, there may have been some observance at Medina, and it is to be noted that al-Ṭabarī says it was the first Friday prayer which Muḥammad himself observed. Friday had become a market day in Medina, probably at first to enable Jews to lay in provisions for the sabbath; but it was also observed by the Arabs. It was doubtless because of these facts that the Muslims of Medina had made something special of the Friday prayer, and Muḥammad was ready to accept their practice. Indeed, it was eventually made obligatory for adult male Muslims to be present on this occasion in the mosque, preferably the *jāmi'* or central mosque of the town.²

Details of other liturgical arrangements are mentioned on pages 9 and 24–6.

The sermon or *khutbah* is an essential feature of the Friday prayer. It seems unlikely that the sermon given here by al-Ṭabarī was actually delivered by Muḥammad on this occasion. One of the verses quoted (8.42) is generally held to have been revealed over a year later at the time of the battle of Badr, while Muḥammad himself would hardly have used the phrase "I bear witness that Muḥammad is his servant and Messenger." A different sermon is reproduced by Ibn Hishām for this occasion.

The choice of a site for mosque and house (1258–60)

From other references it is clear that what was built at this time was a house or series of apartments for Muḥammad and his dependants. The mosque was the courtyard of the private dwell-

2. See art. Djum'a (S.D.Goitein) in *EP*.

ing, perhaps demarcated by a wall. The "building" of the mosque at Qubā' was probably no more than marking off a piece of ground with a wall or fence. At this time Muḥammad had only one wife, Sawdah bt. Zam'ah, the widow of a Muslim who had died in Abyssinia, since 'Ā'ishah still lived with her parents; he had also two unmarried daughters in his household.³ Accommodation would be required for these and also, after the consummation of her marriage, for 'Ā'ishah. Later when Muḥammad had several wives, each had her own apartment opening off the courtyard, and he spent his nights with them in turn.

The choice of a site belonging to the Banū al-Najjār was probably deliberate. Muḥammad was aware that one of the reasons for his invitation to Medina was that people hoped he would be able to put an end to the blood-feuds which had been increasing in violence; and he was careful not to ally himself by marriage with any of the clans of Medina. Al-Najjār was a numerous but not particularly powerful clan, divided into several subclans. The fact that Muḥammad had as great-grandmother a woman of al-Najjār, Salmā bt. 'Amr, could have been the justification for his decision to live among them. They were also in a fairly central position.

Various deaths (1260f.)

About Kulthūm b. Hidm nothing else appears to be known. The three men mentioned at the end were prominent Meccan pagans of the older generation.

As'ad b. Zurārah was one of the first group of six men from Medina to contact Muḥammad, probably in 620, and he also made both the First Pledge of al-'Aqabah in 621 and the Second in 622. He is further credited with being mainly responsible for the conversion of some of the leading men of Medina to Islam; and it was he who, in the year before the Hijrah, had given hospitality to Muḥammad's envoy to Medina, Muṣ'ab b. 'Umayr.⁴ His death must have been a serious loss for Muḥammad. The remark that it is bad for the Jews and Hypocrites implies that it will discourage them from believing in God.

At the second meeting at al-'Aqabah, when the Muslims of

3. See 1263 below.

4. IH, 286-93.

Medina had pledged themselves to defend and protect Muḥammad and the Emigrants, Muḥammad had asked for twelve *nuqabā'* or representatives to be appointed, perhaps as a kind of council or senate for Medina. The men selected were the leading men in each clan of those present. As'ad b. Zurārah was the representative of al-Najjār. Though the names of the men are recorded, there is no record of them having met or decided anything. Muḥammad's decision to become himself the replacement for As'ad may have been made to prevent ill feeling between different sections of the clan, and he may also have realized, now that he had firsthand experience of conditions in Medina, that the institution of *nuqabā'* was not going to serve any useful purpose.

The marriage with 'Ā'ishah (1261-3)

All Muḥammad's marriages and those he arranged for his daughters were made for political reasons. Abū Bakr was his chief lieutenant and aide, and he is reputed to have had an excellent knowledge of the inner politics of the nomadic tribes; thus, he was able to advise Muḥammad in his dealings with those tribes. Muḥammad's betrothal to Abū Bakr's daughter 'Ā'ishah was made despite her tender age in order to cement the relationship between the two men. Muḥammad was similarly married in 625 to Ḥafṣah, the daughter of his other prominent lieutenant 'Umar; she was then eighteen, and her first husband had been killed at Badr.⁵ Another important Emigrant, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, later the third caliph, was married first at Mecca to Muḥammad's daughter Ruqayyah, and then, after her death at the time of the battle of Badr, to another daughter, Umm Kulthūm.⁶ What seems properly to be a betrothal was apparently called a marriage by the Arabs, as may be seen in the case of Muḥammad's daughters and the two sons of Abū Lahab.⁷ The mention of the special features in 'Ā'ishah may have been circulated to offset the extravagant praise by Shī'ites of Muḥammad's daughter Fāṭimah. According to the ideas of the times, the age of nine was seemingly not too young for marriage.

5. See 1383 below.

6. See 1358 and 1373 below.

7. See 1347 below.

The early expeditions (1265-73)

One of the outstanding features of the period between the Hijrah and the death of Muḥammad was a long series of "expeditions" of a warlike character. In a sense, these grew out of the nomadic custom of the *razzia*, the sudden raid in which one tried with superior force to surprise an enemy and drive off his camels. Al-Wāqidi's main surviving work on the career of Muḥammad is called "The Expeditions" (*al-Maghāzī*), and expeditions provide the main structure of the *Sīrah* of Ibn Ishāq. The term, which is used in English for several Arabic words, has a wide range of application; it may be used for the action of a single individual, for an expedition that is mainly a battle (like Badr or Uḥud), for a defensive battle (like the siege of Medina), or for a three-month expedition with thirty thousand men (to Tabūk).

Not surprisingly, there is some uncertainty about the dating and order of the earliest relatively small expeditions. Three small expeditions led by Emigrants are placed by al-Wāqidi in year 1 and by Ibn Ishāq in year 2. Al-Ṭabarī's arrangement is somewhat curious. He first gives an account of these three expeditions based mainly on al-Wāqidi, and then, after remarking that Ibn Ishāq places them in year 2, proceeds to give the latter's account of an expedition led by Muḥammad and two of the previous three. He follows this with Ibn Ishāq's account of three further expeditions led by Muḥammad himself, which according to both sources are in year 2. Yet all this comes under the heading of year 1, which closes with a paragraph based on al-Wāqidi about Abū Qays b. al-Aslat. Year 2 opens with a version from al-Wāqidi of the four expeditions led by Muḥammad. A table in al-Wāqidi's order and with his dating may make the arrangement clearer.

<i>Month/year</i>	<i>Destination</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>References in Ṭ</i>	
9/1	Sif al-Baḥr	Ḥamzah	1265	: 1267-8
10/1	Rābigh/Aḥyā'	'Ubaydah	1265	: 1267
11/1	al-Kharrār	Sa'd	1265-6	: 1270
2/2	al-Abwā'/Waddān	Muḥammad	1266	: 1270
3/2	Buwāt	"	1268	: 1270-1
3/2	Safawān	"	1269-70	: 1271
6/2	al-'Ushayrah	"	1268-9	: 1271

The question of years could be tidied up if the paragraph about Abū Qays were placed immediately after al-Wāqidi's accounts of the three Emigrant expeditions, and if the heading for year 2 were inserted at this point. From the middle of page 1266, the events belong to year 2 apart from that one paragraph.

Some further points may be noted about these expeditions. All except that of Safawān, which was punitive, seem to have had the aim of intercepting a Meccan caravan and gaining booty. All, however, were unsuccessful. Sometimes the Muslim force may have been too weak to have any prospect of success against the men conducting the caravan. On the other hand, Muḥammad had two hundred men for the expedition of Buwāt, and there were only one hundred Meccans with the caravan of twenty-five hundred camels. In light of the new strategy which led to the success of the expedition of Nakhlah (sending out a party with sealed orders), it seems that the earlier failures were due to the ability of the Meccans to gain information from Medina; they doubtless had agents who gave them prior notice of Muslim plans, so that they could either increase the party with the caravan or vary the route.

It is also to be noted that none but Emigrants took part in these early expeditions. Before he encouraged his Meccan followers to join him in making the Hijrah, Muḥammad must have considered how they would make their living at Medina. They could hardly expect to be permanent guests of the Anṣār, the Muslims of Medina, and they probably had no inclination to become farmers, though land seems to have been available. They had some expertise in trade with Gaza and Damascus, but attempts to trade would almost certainly lead to conflict with the Meccans. Therefore, the intercepting of Meccan caravans and disrupting of Meccan trade must have been seen at least as a possibility. The Anṣār presumably acquiesced in these expeditions of Emigrants, but too much reliance should not be placed on the statements that such and such a person (often one of the Anṣār) was left in charge of Medina in Muḥammad's absence, since it is unlikely that at this period Muḥammad himself was in any sense in charge of Medina.

The expedition of Nakhlah (1273-9)

Although only eight men, or at most twelve, took part in this expedition, it was an important stage in the worsening of relations between the Muslims and the pagan Meccans. It was the first occasion on which a Meccan was killed by a Muslim and the first occasion on which the Muslims seized Meccan goods.

The first point to be noted is that the party was sent out eastwards for two days' march, but the sealed orders given to the leader told them to proceed south from there to Baṭn Nakhlah on the road from al-Ṭā'if to Mecca. The exact location is not known, but it must have been to the southeast of Mecca, and the members of the expedition were obviously going to be in considerable danger. All the Muslims professed themselves ready to carry on, but at some point two remained behind the rest of the party, allegedly looking for a straying camel, but this sounds like an excuse. It is not clear whether Muḥammad knew there would be a caravan at this date making for Mecca or merely thought it a probability. The Muslim party did meet a small caravan, probably only a local one, since it was carrying raisins and leather and had only four men attending it. One of the Muslims had his head shaved, and this made the Meccans think they were a group performing the *'umrah* or lesser pilgrimage.

In the accounts of Ibn Ishāq and al-Wāqidī, the Muslims now found themselves faced with a problem. It was the last day of the "sacred month" of Rajab, during which hostilities were forbidden; but by the following day the caravan would have entered the "sacred territory" of Mecca, where hostilities were equally forbidden. They decided to attack at once. One of the Meccans was killed by an arrow, two were taken prisoner, and one escaped to Mecca. Despite this escape, the Muslims were able to return safely to Medina with the prisoners and the caravan. The version of al-Suddī, which al-Ṭabarī gives subsequently, suggests that the fighting occurred on the first day of Rajab. The verse of the Qur'ān quoted (2.217) makes it clear that the fighting was in the month of Rajab, but gives no indication whether it was at the beginning or end.

On reaching Medina safely, the members of the successful party were surprised to find that they were not nearly so well re-

ceived as they had expected. The ostensible reason was that they had killed a man during a sacred month. It seems unlikely that this weighed much with Muḥammad himself, since the sacred month was part of the false religion he was attacking. The matter is more complex than this, however. The Qur'ān itself (2.125; 3.97) acknowledges the sacredness of Meccan territory; but the sacredness of the four months (Rajab, Dhū al-qa'dah, Dhū al-hijjah, Muḥarram) may not have been acknowledged until after the abolition of the intercalary month (*nasī*), usually said to be in the year 10/632.⁸ It is almost certain, however, that the fundamental reason for the disquiet in Medina over this matter was the fear that it would lead to Meccan reprisals against the whole city. It has to be remembered that the Anṣār had not taken part in any expedition against the Meccans, but they had undertaken to protect the Emigrants if these were attacked, and to this extent were deeply involved in the consequences of the expedition to Nakhlah.

The raiding party is said to have offered Muḥammad a share of the booty as chief of their tribe. The pre-Islamic custom was that the chief should receive a quarter of any booty captured by the tribe in order to offset what he had to expend on behalf of the tribe. The later Islamic norm was that Muḥammad received a fifth, but it is doubtful if anything so precise had yet been decided. Since acceptance of a share of the booty would have implied approval of what the Muslim party had done, Muḥammad at first declined. Eventually, however, the matter was settled by a revelation (2.217): "They ask you about the sacred month, fighting in it, fighting in it is a great (sin), but barring from the ways of God, and disbelieving in him and in the sacred mosque, and expelling its people from it, are greater (sins) in God's sight." After this Muḥammad accepted a share of the booty, presumably now satisfied that the Anṣār would support him whatever the Meccans did. The kinsmen of the man killed would doubtless attempt to avenge him, but the Meccans in general could not ignore the loss of face caused by the capture of the caravan almost, as it were, from under their noses.

8. Qur'ān, 9.36f.

The break with the Jews (1279-81)

The change of Qiblah (direction faced in prayer) and the institution of the fast of Ramaḍān are not purely questions of religious observance but are linked with political matters. Muḥammad had from an early date become convinced that the revelations he received were identical in essence to those which were the basis of Judaism and Christianity; he therefore expected that the Jews of Medina would accept him as a prophet. Consequently, when he came to Medina, he was disappointed to find that the Jews there, far from accepting his prophethood, were mostly inclined to poke fun at his revelations. Only one or two formally became Muslims.

The Muslims of Medina appear to have adopted a number of practices from their Jewish neighbours. They kept the Jewish fast of the 'Āshūrā'; most, but not all, of them faced Jerusalem in prayer, and they made something special of the prayer at midday on Fridays. Muḥammad seems at first to have encouraged all these practices. The Qur'ān (5.5) makes it lawful for Muslims to eat Jewish food and to marry Jewish women. After some sixteen or eighteen months in Medina, however, it became clear to Muḥammad that such concessions were not going to win over the Jews, and a series of events occurred to which Western scholars have given the label of "the break with the Jews." The two points here mentioned by al-Ṭabarī are central to this change, namely, the change of Qiblah and the institution of the fast of Ramaḍān.

A later source has a story of how Muḥammad, while leading prayers, received a revelation bidding him face Mecca instead of Jerusalem, upon which he and all the other participants turned round and faced south instead of north, the place where this is said to have happened became known as the Mosque of the Two Qiblahs. No verse in the Qur'ān exactly fits this story, and a careful study of the whole passage (2.142-52) suggests that there may have been a period of uncertainty before a revelation prescribed the new Qiblah. The date of the change of Qiblah is about 11 February 624.

The essential point about the fast of Ramaḍān is that it was to replace the Jewish 'Āshūrā', which the Muslims of Medina had been observing before the Hijrah, and in which Muḥammad and

the Emigrants probably shared. The brief paragraph in al-Ṭabarī suggests that the fast of Ramaḍān was meant to celebrate the deliverance of the Muslims at Badr just as the 'Āshūrā' commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites at the Red Sea. Although al-Ṭabarī records the institution in year 2, it seems impossible that the Muslims could have kept the full fast in this year, since the battle of Badr occurred on or about 19 Ramaḍān. It is conceivable that some days of fasting were observed after the return to Medina, and that this justified the celebration of the 'īd al-fiṭr, the feast of the breaking of the fast.

It seems likely that the events mentioned marked not only the rejection of Jewish practices but also some political realignments among the Muslims. It is from about this period that we hear of the Hypocrites, the nominal Muslims opposed to many of Muḥammad's policies. Their leader was 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy, who had for long had close relations with some of the Jews and had hoped they would help him to become prince of Medina. On the other hand, Sa'd b. Mu'ādh, possibly the strongest man in Medina, now put himself wholeheartedly behind Muḥammad and was instrumental in persuading about two hundred of the Anṣār to join the expedition to Badr—the first time any of the Anṣār had taken part in an expedition. There are various small points which suggest that Sa'd b. Mu'ādh might be described as pro-Arab and anti-Jewish. In 627 it was he who decided that all the men of the Jewish clan of Qurayẓah were to be put to death.

The battle of Badr (1279-1359)

The amount of material about the battle of Badr collected by the historians is a mark of its importance. Perhaps its most significant result was the upsurge of confidence among the Muslims. During the later years at Mecca, the Qur'ānic revelations had been showing how God protected his prophets against those who opposed them and rejected the revelations, and how in the end the prophets and the believers were triumphant and the opponents were punished. The victory of Badr was the way in which God had vindicated his prophet Muḥammad against the Meccan pagans, just as he had vindicated other prophets in other ways. For the ordinary believer it was a powerful confirmation of Muḥammad's claim to be a prophet. The belief that God and his an-

gels worked for them during the battle raised the morale of the Muslims to such a point that it became overconfidence.

Muḥammad himself must have been deeply moved by the confirmation of his prophethood, but he must also have been aware that there were many problems ahead. For even if the Meccans had lost a dozen of their most senior men, Abū Sufyān and a few others were still around, and some capable younger men were coming up; so Meccan power must still be feared. Besides, in addition to the loss of leading men there was a serious loss of prestige, and prestige was necessary for the Meccans if they were to maintain their commercial empire. They were thus bound to attempt to reverse the result, and Muḥammad must have been aware of the fact.

With regard to the expedition itself, as previously noted, this was the first occasion on which men of the Anṣār joined Muḥammad. This doubtless came about largely because of the new understanding between Sa'd b. Mu'ādh and Muḥammad. The majority of the Anṣār had probably decided to support and defend Muḥammad against any Meccan reprisals for the attack at Nakhlah. With the contingent of Anṣār the Muslim force would easily have been strong enough to overpower the men accompanying the caravan, and Muslim intentions probably did not go beyond booty. Muḥammad and Sa'd, however, probably realized that things could become more serious.

The excellence of the Meccan information service is shown by the fact that Abū Sufyān knew about the Muslim expedition to Badr in sufficient time to take evasive action and that the people in Mecca knew in time to send out a relief force. The possibility of such a force may have occurred to Muḥammad, but he probably had no definite information until he was in the vicinity of Badr. On this point the view of 'Urwah in his letter (1286) is to be preferred to that of Ibn Ishāq (1300). Had the Muslims in general known earlier they might have wanted to withdraw, for it was no dishonour to an Arab to avoid an engagement with a superior force. At Badr, however, when the two forces found themselves so close to one another, neither could honourably have retreated. On the other hand, it could be argued that Qur'ān 8.7—God's promise of one of the two companies, the caravan or the relief force—implies that Muḥammad knew something about a relief force be-

fore he knew that the caravan had eluded him. It is just conceivable, then, that he deliberately manoeuvred the Muslims into a situation in which they could not honourably avoid a conflict with the Meccans.

On the Meccan side, Abū Jahl was clearly a "hawk" intent on teaching Muḥammad a lesson and restoring Meccan prestige. It was he who taunted with cowardice those who wanted to withdraw while that was still an option. The right of commanding the Meccans in war belonged to Abū Sufyān, but, because he was absent with the caravan, Abū Jahl was temporarily in command; and it may be that he wanted to make the most of this opportunity. Once the Meccans realized the close proximity of the Muslims, there could be no question of retreating.

Some reasons for the Muslim victory can be discerned. The plan adopted by Muḥammad on the suggestion of one of his followers, namely, blocking up all the wells except one and so depriving the Meccans of water, certainly contributed. It is likely, too, that the Anṣār, because they gained a livelihood by cultivating date-palms and cereal crops, were in better condition physically than the Meccans, whose lives as merchants were probably much more sedentary. Even when they accompanied caravans, they presumably did so on camel-back. The Anṣār, moreover, had gained experience of fighting in the feuds which had been endemic in the oasis. Some of the Emigrants also proved successful fighters, possibly because they were in general younger men than their opponents, while their belief in God and in the life of Paradise doubtless increased their confidence.

The accounts of the treatment of prisoners and other events of the period after the battle give interesting insights into the outlook and moral attitudes of the people of the time. The first and lengthiest part of al-Ṭabarī's material comes from Ibn 'Abbās through his disciple 'Ikrimah, that is, from authorities on the exegesis of the Qur'ān, not authorities on Muḥammad's career. The critical verse is 8.67: "It is not for any prophet to have captives until he has made slaughter in the land . . . (or "until he has subdued the land")." Some of the surrounding verses belong to the period of the battle of Badr but others belong to that of Uḥud, and it is difficult to distinguish the two. It seems likely that 8.67 was not revealed until after Uḥud and is perhaps part of the attempt to

explain why that was so disastrous. On this assumption the verse is saying: "If you had not been so keen on ransoms after Badr and had not taken prisoners, these losses would not have befallen you." It is probably not coincidence that in some sources the number of prisoners at Badr and the number of Muslim dead at Uhud are both stated to be seventy. It should not be supposed, however, that killing instead of taking prisoners was thought of chiefly as a way of weakening the enemy militarily. It was seen rather as inflicting a punishment and something of a moral duty, in line with the *lex talionis*.

Modern Westerners are inclined to think of the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as barbaric,⁹ but in actuality the *lex talionis* is a primitive way of maintaining security for life and property. It is indeed almost the only way of doing this when there is no strong central authority capable of punishing wrongdoers. The basis is the solidarity of the group of kinsmen. A person is less likely to kill or injure another without serious cause if he knows that the victim's kin-group will inflict a like injury on his own kin-group. All the groups recognized that it was essential that injuries and deaths should be avenged, and usually ended the blood-feud when proper vengeance had been taken, though it was sometimes difficult to agree on what was proper and equal vengeance. This meant that the system was only effective when the next of kin saw it as a sacred duty to avenge a death. When it became the practice to accept a blood-wit of camels instead of a life, the conservative moralists taunted those who did so with being content with milk instead of blood. It is noteworthy that in al-Ṭabarī's second account (on page 1356) 'Umar says that the Mecs had called Muḥammad a liar and driven him out, and so deserved to die; and this has the implication that in not having them put to death Muḥammad was failing to perform his duty.

The expulsion of Banū Qaynuqā' (1360-2)

One of the limitations of al-Ṭabarī's method of writing history is to be seen in the fact that this is the first reference to the Jews of Medina. The title "the break with the Jews" was given above to the section on the change of Qiblah and the institution of the fast

9. Exodus 21.23-5; Leviticus 24.17-21.

of Ramaḍān, but al-Ṭabarī himself did not mention the Jews there. Yet from the Qur'ān it is clear that the Jews were a serious problem for Muḥammad from the day of his arrival in Medina. From the little he knew previously about the Jewish religion, he expected the Jews to receive him as a prophet. To the generality of the Jews, however, it was inconceivable that there could be a prophet who did not come from the chosen people, that is, themselves. To make things worse for Muḥammad and the Muslims, the Jews did not merely refuse to recognize Muḥammad as a prophet but made fun of him in various ways and tried to discredit his prophethood by showing that some of the Qur'ānic assertions about Biblical matters were incorrect.

The expulsion of the Banū Qaynuqā' is probably to be seen as a corollary of the break with the Jews. It is possible that Muḥammad and Sa'd b. Mu'ādh had agreed that they would get rid of the Jews as opportunities presented themselves. According to al-Wāqidi, the immediate occasion of the siege of Qaynuqā' was a trick played by a Jew on an Arab woman as she sat in their market. An Arab killed this Jew, and then another Jew killed the Arab. At this, the Jews took refuge in their strongholds, and the Muslims came and besieged them. This incident was no more than a pretext, and by omitting it al-Ṭabarī seems to have judged it so. The very life of the Islamic religio-political community at Medina depended on wholehearted belief that Muḥammad was a prophet and the Qur'ān the word of God, but this belief was endangered by some of the criticisms made by the Jews. This was the fundamental reason for the attacks on the three main Jewish clans in Medina and on particular individuals. Muḥammad was doubtless aware that the Jews were relatively wealthy, and the Muslims benefited from the seizure of their wealth; but that was not the primary reason for attacking them.

Banū Qaynuqā' were goldsmiths and armourers, and also conducted a market. They had been confederates of 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy, and when they surrendered after a fortnight's siege, he pleaded for them, though without much success. The statement quoted by al-Ṭabarī from al-Wāqidi that Muḥammad wanted to kill them seems to be mistaken. It was against their expulsion that 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy argued on the ground that Muḥammad

might some day be in need of their skill as armourers, but Muḥammad was not to be moved. On leaving Medina, they are said to have gone first to Wādī al-Qurā, where there were Jewish settlements, then to Syria.

The expulsion of Banū Qaynuqā' was only the first of a series of attacks on Jewish groups and individuals. A few months later, five men of the Anṣār (of the tribe of al-Aws) killed Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, who counted as a Jew because his mother was Jewish, although his father was a pagan Arab from a nomadic tribe. He was a noted poet who after Badr went to Mecca and did his best to discredit the Muslim cause and create dissension. Two of those involved in the killing were his milk-brothers (1368-72). Al-Ṭabari follows this almost immediately (1375-83) with the account of the killing of Abū Rāfi' Sallām b. Abī al-Ḥuqayq; but this probably occurred considerably later, after the siege of Medina in the year 8/627. He had seconded the efforts of Ka'b b. al-Ashraf against the Muslims and later had helped to persuade nomadic tribes to take part in military operations against Medina.

Minor expeditions between Badr and Uḥud (1362-8; 1373-5)

Apart from the "expedition" against Ka'b b. al-Ashraf, there were four between Badr and Uḥud led by Muḥammad himself and one led by his adoptive son, Zayd b. Ḥārithah. The early Muslim scholars discussed the dating of these expeditions at length without coming to any firm conclusions. Furthermore, so little information is given about them that it is difficult to know the precise aim of some, much less to determine the exact dates.

The first was the so-called "barley-meal raid" (*sawīq*) in which the Muslims were responding to a challenge from the Meccans. Abū Sufyān probably intended to do no more than make a gesture which might help to restore Meccan prestige among the nomads, but his two hundred horsemen could have inflicted heavy casualties on any Muslims fighting on foot—and the Muslims had only one or two horses. His retreat when a Muslim force came out against him seems to show that he was not looking for a confrontation. Significant points are the apparent ease with which he entered Medina and the fact that a leading man of a Jewish clan was prepared to converse with him. (The fact that the nickname of

"barley-meal raid" was also given to what is otherwise known as Badr al-Maw'id¹⁰ indicates the difficulties the historians had with the small early expeditions.)

The other expeditions led by Muḥammad were against nomadic tribes and were perhaps chiefly intended to convince potentially hostile nomads that the Muslims could not be attacked with impunity. The expedition led by Zayd to al-Qaradah was, like that to Badr, aimed at a caravan. The Meccan leaders realized the difficulty they were in after Badr, since any caravan following the normal coastal route northwards could easily be attacked by raiders from Medina. They therefore sent a small but wealthy caravan by a more easterly route through Najd. Muḥammad must have learnt about this, for he sent out Zayd with a force of a hundred men, more than sufficient to overawe the Meccans and make them abandon their caravan. Al-Ṭabarī, following Ibn Ishāq, says the caravan was led by Abū Sufyān, but al-Wāqidi makes the leader Ṣafwān b. Umayyah, supported by Abū Zam'ah al-Aswad b. al-Muṭṭalib.¹¹

The battle of Uhud (1383–1430)

The Meccan defeat at Badr, along with subsequent events such as the loss of a caravan at al-Qaradah, had made it clear to all that if Mecca was to survive as a commercial power it must somehow reduce Muḥammad to impotence and restore its own prestige among the Arabs generally. To the achievement of this end the Meccans directed strenuous efforts in the months after Badr under the forceful leadership of Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb. By the spring of 625, he was able to mobilize three thousand men from the men of Mecca and the allied tribes in the neighbourhood; of these, 700 had coats of mail and two hundred were mounted on horses. They set out about 11 March and reached the oasis of Medina on Thursday, 21 March, entering it from the northwest corner and pasturing their animals in the fields of cereals there.

Muḥammad's first plan was that the people of Medina should retire to the strongholds or fortified houses (*āṭām*), of which each

10. See 1457–9 below.

11. Abū Sufyān is mentioned by al-Ṭabarī in his report from al-Wāqidi, but he is not mentioned at all in al-Wāqidi, 197f.

clan had several. The Meccans would find these virtually impregnable and would be unable to use their cavalry if there was fighting in the confined spaces between the strongholds. Some of the Anṣār, however, could not bear to see their fields devastated by the Meccans and insisted on marching out to confront them. Somewhat against his better judgement, Muḥammad agreed. He set out with a thousand men and, using a guide with local knowledge, slipped past the Meccans and took up a position to the north of their camp on the lower slopes of the hill of Uḥud, where he could not be attacked by the Meccan cavalry. Before he reached this position, however, 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy with three hundred men had returned to the strongholds in the centre of the oasis, leaving only seven hundred men with Muḥammad. Presumably he acted in this way because he disagreed with Muḥammad's policies, though there are divergent views on the point. From this time on, 'Abd Allāh b. Ubayy is known as the leader of the Hypocrites (*munāfiqūn*), the nominal Muslims opposed to Muḥammad.

Al-Ṭabarī's method of presenting without comment a series of slightly different reports about incidents in the battle does not produce a clear picture but suggests rather a long, confused *mélée*. By following the more coherent accounts and making use of the references in the Qur'ān, the course of the battle may be outlined somewhat as follows.

It possibly began with an unsuccessful attack by the Meccan cavalry. Muḥammad's main defence against them is usually taken to be his archers, posted on his left flank. The report from Ibn 'Abbās (page 1394) most probably does not mean that al-Zubayr and his men had to move against the cavalry but that they were posted in such a way that they could deflect a cavalry charge in cooperation with the archers. Apart from this, the chief Meccan assault seems to have been an advance by the infantry against the main body of Muslims, who may have begun to move down from the hill slopes. The references to the carrying of the Meccan standard by men of the clan of 'Abd al-Dār (and the deaths of eleven of them) seem to imply that they led this advance. Fierce fighting ensued, of which the Muslims had the better. The Meccans retreated towards their camp, perhaps even took to flight and abandoned their camp (as is suggested by the mention of the

women running away). It is doubtful whether the Muslims actually began to plunder the camp, but some sections of the Muslim force saw opportunities for plunder, and in particular some of the archers left their positions.

When these movements were observed by Khālid b. al-Walīd, commanding the right wing of the cavalry, he caused consternation by charging the Muslim flank and rear. It was at this point that Muḥammad was personally involved in fighting and was wounded. However, he was able to rally a number of Muslims round him and to regain the slopes of Uhūd. They may have been a little higher than previously, and they beat off Meccan attacks without much difficulty. One body of Muslims, however, instead of making for the hill, tried to reach a stronghold to the south of the Meccan camp, and it was probably they who suffered the severest casualties. The figure is given of seventy Muslims killed, four Emigrants and sixty-six of the Anṣār.¹² As soon as Abū Sufyān realized that it would be impossible to dislodge the Muslims from their position on the hill, he decided to leave Medina and return to Mecca. The whole Meccan army moved off to Ḥamrā' al-Asad, eight miles to the south.

To understand this surprising denouement, it is necessary to assess carefully the significance of the battle for the two sides. The fact that there were seventy Muslim casualties as against twenty-two Meccan suggests a serious defeat for the Muslims, and both Muslim and Western scholars have often interpreted it in this way. Yet, a little reflection shows that it was far from being a victory for the Meccans. They had boasted that they would exact several Muslim lives for every Meccan life lost at Badr, whereas, on the assumption that seventy Meccans fell at Badr, the Muslim losses in the two battles were less than those of the Meccans, and so they had not even achieved a life for a life. More seriously, the Meccans had completely failed in their strategic aim of breaking Muḥammad's power. These facts point to the conclusion that in the early stage of the fighting, before the reversal of fortune brought about by the cavalry charge, the Meccan infantry had had much the worse of it; many of the horses, too, may have been wounded by the Muslim arrows. Abū Sufyān must

12. IH, 607-9; W, 300-7.

have reckoned that despite the Muslim casualties the Meccans were not capable of attacking the strongholds of Medina. He may also have hoped that those of the inhabitants of Medina who were least enthusiastic about Muḥammad and his religion would now turn against him and expel him, and he would not want to do anything to antagonize such people.

From a strictly military point of view, then, Muḥammad had not been seriously defeated; apart from the possibility of increased disaffection towards him in Medina, he had come out of the battle at least as well as the Meccans. What Abū Sufyān could not have realized, however, was that the happenings at Uḥud were for Muḥammad and the Muslims a serious spiritual reverse. After the victory of Badr, the Muslims had thought that they were practically invincible, since God and his angels were helping them. In the Qur'ān (8.66), Muḥammad was told to encourage the Muslims to fight, for "if there are twenty steadfast men among you, they will overcome two hundred, and if a hundred, they will overcome a thousand." To the ordinary Muslim, conscious of so many comrades dead, it must have seemed that God was not supporting them after all. Muḥammad's own faith may have been shaken, at least briefly. In due course the Qur'ān made it clear that the discomfiture did not indicate withdrawal of God's support but was caused by the Muslims' own disobedience and excessive desire for plunder.

Whatever Muḥammad's inmost feelings in the immediate aftermath of Uḥud, he publicly put a brave face on things, and on the following day led out about nine hundred men to Ḥamrā' al-Asad, from which the Meccans had now moved on to al-Rawḥā'. This expedition was really a kind of gesture of defiance intended, as Ibn Ishāq put it, "to lower the morale of the enemy . . . and to give them the impression that his strength was unimpaired." To heighten the show of strength, Muḥammad told the men to gather wood by day and to light a large number of fires at night—a matter mentioned by al-Wāqidi but not thought worthy of inclusion by al-Ṭabarī. A friendly nomad, Ma'bad al-Khuzā'i, also helped by exaggerating the size and warlike attitude of the Muslim force. At the same time, Abū Sufyān was using comparable means to scare the Muslims into withdrawing, while some of the Meccans wanted to attack Medina again. It is unlikely, however,

that either side thought seriously of again engaging the enemy, and both soon returned to base.

The expeditions of year 4 (1431-59)

For an adequate understanding of the events of year 4, which were relatively minor, it is necessary to appreciate more of the general background than is made clear in the materials presented by al-Ṭabarī.

The key is to be found in the activities of the Meccans after Uḥud. Despite the casualties inflicted on the Muslims, the Meccans had failed to dislodge Muḥammad or even, as things turned out, to seriously weaken him. Yet this was what they had to do if they were to preserve their commerce and their wealth. It must have been clear to Abū Sufyān, too, that the army he had managed to collect from Mecca itself and the small neighbouring tribes was not sufficient to achieve their aim. For complete success they would have to have the support of some of the great nomadic tribes; and for the next two years the Meccans were making strenuous efforts to gain this support, using all possible means from promises of booty to straight bribes.

In consequence of this, Muḥammad's general strategy during these years, apart from restoring confidence among the Anṣār and strengthening his position in Medina, was to take all possible measures to counteract what the Meccans were doing. There was an expedition shortly after Uḥud (not mentioned by al-Ṭabarī) into regions friendly to the Meccans in order to counteract their propaganda about Muḥammad's weakness and display something of the Muslims' military power. The expedition to Dhāt al-Riqā' (1453-7) was somewhat similar. Muḥammad also hoped to persuade groups from the nomadic tribes to accept Islam and toward this end was prepared to take calculated risks. Examples of this, in which the gamble did not come off, were the expeditions of al-Rajī' (1431-7) and Bi'r Ma'ūnah (1441-8). Muḥammad's prestige was apparently now such that one group or faction within a tribe might hope to improve its standing in the tribe by being first to embrace Islam. Something of this sort may have been at the root of the attack on the Muslims at al-Rajī'. It was certainly present in the disaster at Bi'r Ma'ūnah.

In the latter case, the chief of the tribe of 'Āmir, Abū Barā'

ʿĀmir b. Mālik, seems to have wanted to improve his position in the tribe against a rival faction led by his nephew, ʿĀmir b. al-Ṭufayl. Abū Barāʾ gave his formal protection to the Muslim party, and this should have been respected by all the tribe; and it was in fact respected by all despite the pleas of his nephew to disregard it. Foiled at this point, the nephew suggested to nearby clans of the tribe of Sulaym, with whom he must have been on good terms, that they could attack the Muslims with impunity. All the Muslims were killed except a nomadic confederate who was able to claim that he was protected by some oath. What happened next is puzzling to the Westerner. On his way back to Medina this confederate met two men of the tribe of ʿĀmir and killed them; as a result Muḥammad had to pay blood-money to ʿĀmir for these two men, although he was unable to claim blood-money for the forty or more Muslims who had been killed. The explanation is that the actual killing had been done by men of Sulaym, so that in Arab eyes they alone were responsible (and Muḥammad was not in a position to demand blood-money from Sulaym, which was friendly to Mecca). ʿĀmir b. al-Ṭufayl had suggested the killing and so in Western eyes was morally responsible, but he had not been physically involved in it, and so he and his tribe of ʿĀmir were not liable for blood-money. The nomadic confederate was a powerful and brutal man who a little earlier had gone to Mecca in an attempt to kill Abū Sufyān (1437-41).

In the case of the last expedition of the year, that of Badr al-Mawʿid (1457-9), it seems clear that neither side really meant to engage the other in battle, but both put on a show of brinkmanship to convince the tribes of the region that they themselves had no fear, whereas the opponents were on the point of running away.

The expulsion of Banū al-Naḍir (1448-53)

The main underlying reason for the expulsion of the clan of al-Naḍir was the same as in the case of Qaynuqāʾ, namely, that Jewish criticisms endangered the ordinary Muslim's belief in Muḥammad's prophethood and in the Qurʾān as revelation from God. It should also be kept in mind that the attack was made only a few weeks after the Muslim loss of life at al-Rajīʾ and Biʾr Maʿūnah, when many people in Medina must have been enter-

taining gloomy feelings. Some of the details are obscure. The clan of al-Naḍīr had some sort of alliance with the tribe of 'Āmir, but it is not clear how this affected the question of blood-money. Again, while it is possible that some men of al-Naḍīr really planned to drop a stone on Muḥammad and kill him, it is also possible that the allegation was no more than an excuse to justify the attack. Even if there is some truth in the story, however, the incident was only the occasion for the attack, not the fundamental reason. Apart from the general hostility of the Jews to Muḥammad and Islam, a chief of al-Naḍīr had given hospitality and information to Abū Sufyān at the time of the "barley-meal raid" in 624, and Muḥammad may have been aware of this. The result of the Meccan attack was similar to that on Qaynuqā', except that some of the clan of al-Naḍīr remained at the oasis of Khaybar where they had lands.

Muḥammad's family

During year 4 (about October 625), Muḥammad lost his eldest grandson, 'Abd Allāh, the son of 'Uthmān and Muḥammad's daughter Ruqayyah. A few months later, however, in January 626, 'Alī and Fāṭimah had a second son, al-Ḥusayn (1453).

Muḥammad married Zaynab bt. Khuzaymah about February 626 (1441). Her first husband al-Ṭufayl b. al-Ḥārith had divorced her and then she had married his brother 'Ubaydah, who had been killed at Badr. Muḥammad may have felt that he had an obligation to her, since her two husbands had been from the clan of al-Muṭṭalib, which was virtually part of his own clan of Hāshim; she herself belonged to the tribe of 'Āmir, with which he was cultivating good relations.

About a month later he took another wife, Umm Salamah, the widow of Abū Salamah, who had died from wounds received at Uhud after apparently recovering. Both were from the Meccan clan of Makhzūm, the clan of Abū Jahl, with which it was important for Muḥammad to have good relations.

Al-Ṭabarī and his Sources

Al-Ṭabarī's main source for the first four years of the Hijrah was the *Sīrah* or biography of the Prophet by Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767). A form of this is still extant and is available in scholarly

printed editions and in an English translation by Alfred Guillaume. The extant form of the *Sīrah* is the recension of it by another scholar, Ibn Hishām (d. 218/833), who added some small items of information but also omitted a few passages. In the present volume, the most notable omissions are those of how the Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās took part in the battle of Badr as a pagan and was captured. Though not found in Ibn Hishām's recension, these have been reproduced by al-Ṭabarī.¹³ Guillaume places Ibn Hishām's additions in an appendix but includes in his main text passages of Ibn Ishāq's work from al-Ṭabarī and others. While al-Ṭabarī retains most of the strictly narrative parts of Ibn Ishāq, he omits some matters only incidental to the main account, as well as the lists of names, the detailed references to Qur'ānic texts about Badr, Uḥud and the like, and most of the poetry.

To the material from Ibn Ishāq, al-Ṭabarī adds divergent accounts from a large number of sources. The most important of these is al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), whose *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* ("Book of the Expeditions") has been excellently edited. He seems to have studied questions of dating more thoroughly than Ibn Ishāq, and al-Ṭabarī always notes where his conclusions differ from the latter's. Apart from this, however, al-Ṭabarī only reproduces material from al-Wāqidī where it is significantly different from Ibn Ishāq, but he does not reproduce material found only in al-Wāqidī.

Another source worthy of mention is an early document, the letter of 'Urwah b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/712) to the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik.¹⁴ Ibn Ishāq uses material from 'Urwah but does not seem to have known of this document.

Al-Ṭabarī also has a small amount of material for which he gives no source, such as statements about births, deaths, and marriages. These were possibly regarded as matters of common knowledge.

Problems of Chronology

For the first ten years of the Hijrah there are special difficulties about the correlation of Islamic dates with Christian. The "stan-

13. See pp. 1290, 1323, 1339f, 1344, and notes 65 and 101.

14. See pp. 1284-9 and notes 16 and 56.

dard" correlation (as found in *Wüstenfeld-Mahler'sche Vergleichungs-Tabellen*, ed. Bertold Spuler, Wiesbaden 1961) has been followed here. This is based on the assumption that the strict Islamic calendar, without intercalary months, was followed from the beginning of year 1. This assumption, however, is almost certainly wrong, since the Qur'ānic verse (9.37) forbidding the use of the intercalary month (*nasī*) was revealed at the Pilgrimage of the year 10 (March 632). There is thus a presumption that before that date three or four intercalary months had been observed by the Muslims since the Hijrah. There is no record, however, of how many such months there had been, nor in what years. This leads to discrepancies about the day of the week on which certain events happened. Thus Muḥammad is said to have arrived at Qubā' in the oasis of Medina on Monday, 12 Rabi' al-awwal; but according to the "standard" correlation, this was a Friday. Attention has not been called to discrepancies of this type except in note 1. The alternative method of dating events as so many months after the Hijrah is a useful check, but does not solve the problems.

While Dr. Michael McDonald and I have cooperated closely in this volume, the primary work of translation has been his and that of annotation and introduction mine. The rendering of Qur'ānic verses is from *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* by Marmaduke Pickthall.

W. Montgomery Watt

The Victory of Islam
Volume VIII
Translated by Michael Fishbein

This volume covers the history of the Muslim community and the biography of Muḥammad in the middle Medinan years. It begins with the unsuccessful last Meccan attack on Medina, known as the Battle of the Trench.

Events following this battle show the gradual collapse of Meccan resistance to Islam. The next year, when Muḥammad set out on pilgrimage to Mecca, the Meccans at first blocked the road, but eventually a ten-year truce was negotiated at al-Ḥudaybiyah, with Muḥammad agreeing to postpone his pilgrimage until the following year. The Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah was followed by a series of Muslim expeditions, climaxing in the important conquest of Khaybar. In the following year Muḥammad made the so-called Pilgrimage of Fulfillment unopposed.

Al-Ṭabarī's account emphasizes Islam's expanding geographical horizon during this period. Soon after the Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah, Muḥammad is said to have sent letters to six foreign rulers inviting them to become Muslims. Another example of this expanding horizon was the unsuccessful expedition to Muṭah in Jordan.

Shortly afterward the Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah broke down, and Muḥammad marched on Mecca. The Meccans capitulated, and Muḥammad entered the city on his own terms. He treated the city leniently, and most of the Meccan oligarchy swore allegiance to him as Muslims.

Two events in the personal life of Muḥammad during this period caused controversy in the community. Muḥammad fell in love with and married Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh, the divorced wife of his adopted son Zayd. Because of Muḥammad's scruples, the marriage took place only after a Qur'ānic revelation permitting believers to marry the divorced wives of their adopted sons. In the Affair of the Lie, accusations against Muḥammad's young wife 'Ā'ishah were exploited by various factions in the community and in Muḥammad's household. In the end, a Qur'ānic revelation proclaimed 'Ā'ishah's innocence and the culpability of the rumormongers.

This volume of al-Ṭabarī's *History* records the collapse of Meccan resistance to Islam, the triumphant return of Muḥammad to his native city, the conversion to Islam of the Meccan oligarchy, and the community's successful weathering of a number of potentially embarrassing events in Muḥammad's private life.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME VIII

The Victory of Islam

MUḤAMMAD AT MEDINA

A.D. 626-630/A.H. 5-8



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī

(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME VIII

The Victory of Islam

translated and annotated
by

Michael Fishbein

University of California, Los Angeles

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

In his monumental work al-Ṭabarī explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators. The thirty-ninth volume is a compendium of biographies of early members of the Muslim community, compiled by al-Ṭabarī, although not strictly a part of his *History*, it complements it.

The *History* has been divided here into thirty-nine volumes, each of which covers about 200 pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear in the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the

chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, like Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as "dirham," and "imām," have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation is aimed chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

EP¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition. Leiden, 1913-42

EP²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. Leiden, 1960-

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, 1967-

IH: Ibn Hishām, *Sirat Rasūl Allāh*, ed. M. al-Saqqā et al., Cairo, 1936

W: al-Wāqidi, *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, ed. Marsden Jones, London, 1966



Translator's Foreword



This volume deals with the history of the Muslim community from A.H. 5 to the first part of A.H. 8, roughly the middle of A.D. 626 to the beginning of 630. During this time, the position of Muḥammad and of the community acknowledging his prophethood and following the religion embodied in the Qur'ān changed dramatically. At the beginning of the period the Meccan pagans with their allies mounted a direct attack against Medina, by the end of the period Mecca itself had capitulated, and most of its influential leaders had become at least nominal Muslims. Medina itself had become a purely Muslim polity. The last remaining Jewish tribe, the Banu Qurayzah, had been defeated and annihilated, and the internal Arab opposition (the so-called "hypocrites" led by 'Abdal-lāh b. Ubayy) had disintegrated. There were signs that Muḥammad had begun to think about the future of Islam within and beyond the Arabian peninsula. Although the factual basis of the stories of Muḥammad's letters to the rulers of the Byzantine, Persian, and Ethiopian empires and their satellites in the Arabian peninsula during this period cannot be determined, Muslim military expeditions to destinations in northern Arabia (Dūmat al-Jandal and Khaybar) and the penetration into Byzantine territory that ended with the battle of Mu'tah give evidence of expanding political horizons. In short, although Muḥammad and Islam at the beginning of the period could still be seen as a local phenomenon, by the end of the period Muḥammad was, as one of his former opponents put it, "the king of the Hījāz."

Although the political developments of the period are well-documented in al-Ṭabarī's account, there is less material about the doctrinal development of Islam. Some incidents may have become part of the traditional biography of Muḥammad because of their ramifications for Islamic law. Muḥammad's marriage to the divorced wife of his adoptive son Zayd and the punishment meted out to those involved in spreading false rumors about the chastity of Muḥammad's young wife 'Ā'ishah had legal ramifications and as such merited inclusion, despite the sensitivity of the subject. The arrangements made concerning the conquered lands of Khaybar became important precedents for the treatment of conquered agricultural land in the early years of the caliphate and beyond. As for the letters to foreign rulers, one can say that they document the direction in which later Muslims believed Muḥammad's sense of universal mission developed during this period. Finally, the text of Muḥammad's speech after the conquest of Mecca contains interesting theological, as well as legal, material.

Muḥammad's Marriages

The marriage to Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh, with which al-Ṭabarī's account of the events A.H. 5 begins, was unlike Muḥammad's previous marriages. These had either cemented friendships with leading Muslims (such were the marriages to 'Ā'ishah bt. Abī Bakr in A.H. 1 and to Ḥafṣah bt. 'Umar in A.H. 3) or involved Muslim widows in need of support and protection (such were the marriages to Sawdah bt. Zam'ah, whom Muḥammad married while still at Mecca, Umm Salamah bt. al-Mughīrah in A.H. 4, and Zaynab bt. Khuzaymah in A.H. 4). At the time of his marriage to Zaynab bt. Jaḥsh, Muḥammad was married probably to four women (there is question about the date of his marriage to Juwayriyah, who was captured in a raid dated by al-Wāqidi in A.H. 5, but which al-Ṭabarī, following Ibn Ishāq, places in A.H. 6). The account given by al-Ṭabarī, drawn from al-Wāqidi (who uses material from 'Ā'ishah) and the Egyptian scholar Yūnus b. 'Abd al-A'lā, but not from Ibn Ishāq, portrays the marriage as growing out of strong physical attraction. Zaynab, who was Muḥammad's cousin, had been married by Muḥammad's arrangement to Muḥammad's freed slave Zayd b. Ḥārithah, who lived in Muḥammad's household and came

to be regarded as his adoptive son—so that he was regularly addressed as Zayd, son of Muḥammad. Whether the marriage between Zayd and Zaynab was a *mésalliance* from the beginning is speculation, though the account maintains that Zayd was not reluctant to divorce his wife and allow her to marry Muḥammad. Muḥammad is portrayed as reluctant to proceed with the marriage because of scruples about whether marrying one's adopted son's former wife violated the prohibited degrees of marriage. Arab customary practice recognized kinship relations not based on blood ties: fosterage (having nursed from the same woman) was one such relationship; the question whether adoption fell into this category must have been unclear among Muslims. The marriage did not take place until after a Qur'ānic revelation was received, giving permission for believers to marry the divorced wives of their adopted sons. One can see this as part of the development of Islamic family law—a rejection of the legal fiction that a stepparent has a blood relationship with his ward that could affect the physical relationship of marriage. The account presented by al-Ṭabarī is forthright about the strength of the attraction and its role in the marriage. Similar frankness appears in the account in A.H. 6 of Muḥammad's marriage to Juwayriyah, "a sweet, beautiful woman, who captivated anyone who looked at her" (the words are 'Ā'ishah's). She had been captured during a raid on the Banū al-Muṣṭaliq and, in accordance with custom, became the slave of one of her captors. The latter agreed to free her in exchange for a sum of money. Juwayriyah approached Muḥammad for help, and the latter, captivated by her beauty, offered her "something better" than payment of the price of her freedom—namely, marriage with himself. Other marriages during this period were to Rayḥānah bt. 'Amr, captured in the attack on the Banū Qurayẓah in A.H. 5 (she apparently remained a concubine, rather than a full wife); Māriyah the Copt in A.H. 6 or 7 (she was a gift from the ruler of Egypt); Umm Ḥabībah bt. Abī Sufyān in A.H. 6 or 7 (she was the widow of a Muslim emigrant to Ethiopia); Ṣafiyyah bt. Ḥuyayy in A.H. 7 (she was captured in the conquest of Khaybar); and Maymūnah bt. al-Ḥārith in A.H. 7 (she was a widow and the sister-in-law of Muḥammad's uncle al-'Abbās; the marriage, contracted while Muḥammad was in a state of ritual consecration in connection with the lesser pilgrimage, had legal ramifications).

The Battle of the Trench (al-Khandaq)

The previous major engagement between the Muslims and the Meccan pagans, the battle of Uhud, had ended inconclusively in Shawwāl of A.H. 3 (March 625). The Muslims had suffered heavier casualties than in any previous engagement (the figure seventy is given), but the Meccans also had suffered casualties and had returned home without pressing for a more decisive conclusion. Muslim morale had been badly shaken. The next major assault by the Meccans on Medina—it was to be the last—took place two years later, in Shawwāl of A.H. 5 (February 627). According to the composite account in al-Ṭabarī, the initial stimulus came from a group of Jews from the expelled Medinan tribe of Banū al-Naḍīr. They went to Mecca and promised to aid Quraysh against their common enemy, and they also enlisted the help of the north Arabian tribe of Ghatafān. Because the attack included these Jewish and north Arabian allies of the Meccans, it came to be known as the attack of "the Allied Parties" (*al-aḥzāb*). The Meccans and their allies considerably outnumbered the Muslims (the figure of 10,000 attackers against 3,000 Muslim defenders is given), and the Meccans had come with horses. The Meccan position, however, was less commanding than it might appear. The remaining Jews of Medina (the Banū Qurayẓah) sided only reluctantly with the attackers; Muḥammad thus was able to trick the Meccans into believing that the Medinan Jews intended to betray them. The allies from Ghatafān proved ready to be bought off by an offer of a third of the year's date harvest. Finally, employing a strategy suggested by a Persian convert, Salmān, the Muslims had constructed a defensive trench along the northern approaches to Medina (the southern approach, being mountainous, needed no fortification), and this trench could not be jumped by the Meccan horsemen. After nearly a month of standing in position, their provisions low and the weather taking its toll, the Meccans retreated, their morale broken. They never again attempted an assault on Medina.

The Attack on the Banū Qurayẓah

An immediate consequence of the failure of the Meccan attack was the extermination of the Jewish tribe of Banū Qurayẓah for their support of the Meccans, however lukewarm it had been.

Several motives for Muḥammad's behavior can be seen. There was strategic fear that the Banū Qurayẓah might continue to be open to the blandishments of their coreligionists. There was a religious element too. Although the Banū Qurayẓah were clients of the Arab tribe of al-Aws, the leader of al-Aws deputed to pass judgment on them (Sa'd b. Mu'ādh) decided to reject the claims of the Banū Qurayẓah as his clients and to act "for the sake of God." This seems to indicate a feeling that the continued religious opposition of the Jews made coexistence with them within Medina impossible. The brutality of the punishment (extermination of all adult males, rather than expulsion or enslavement) points to darker motives of ethnic hatred and vengeance, and this dark side can be seen in the fury with which the attack was launched. According to the account from Ibn Ishāq, the Angel Gabriel himself came to Muḥammad immediately after the withdrawal of Quraysh and forbade him to lay down his arms: he was to hasten immediately to attack the Banū Qurayẓah, and the angels would fight also. This supernatural element indicates something beyond political calculation. It also points to the fact that the treatment of the Banū Qurayẓah was unique and did not become a precedent for subsequent Muslim treatment of the Jews, which, as demonstrated by the fate of the Jews of Khaybar in A.H. 7, was more lenient. Although the Jews of Khaybar had been involved in compromising relations with the Meccan pagans, they were allowed to remain on their land and work it as sharecroppers for their new Muslim overlords. Only in the caliphate of 'Umar were they forced to leave, and then as free men.

The Slander against 'Ā'ishah

The events of A.H. 6 included a number of expeditions. The expedition against the Banū Liḥyān, allies of Quraysh, involved a considerable force of men sent to avenge the murder of a number of Muslims. The expedition to Dhū Qarad was in reprisal for a raid by Ghāṭafān. The expedition to al-Muraysī' against the Banū al-Muṣṭaliq can be seen as a demonstration of Muslim control of the coastal caravan route to Syria. The military and political aspects of the raid were, however, overshadowed by an incident involving Muḥammad's young wife 'Ā'ishah. The first-person narrative by

'Ā'ishah of how she accidentally was left behind by the returning Muslim caravan, her rescue by a young Muslim rider, the rumors that this generated, and her eventual vindication in a Qur'ānic revelation forms one of the most interesting narratives of this section of al-Ṭabarī. 'Ā'ishah, who must have told the story to a scholar years later (note her asides about how little she weighed at the time, how insignificant she felt herself to be, and the primitive toilet arrangements in Medina), comes across as a talented *raconteuse*, with a good deal of psychological finesse and a sense of time's changes. The narrative deserves careful literary, as well as historical, attention.

Relations with Mecca from al-Ḥudaybiyah to the Conquest

In Dhū al-Qa'dah of A.H. 6 (March-April 628), about a year after the Meccan retreat from Medina after the battle of the Trench, Muḥammad decided to set out with a body of his followers to perform the rites of the lesser pilgrimage (*'umrah*) in Mecca. The framework of al-Ṭabarī's account of the episode is drawn from Ibn Ishāq, with added details from a variety of other sources. For all its richness, it says almost nothing about Muḥammad's motives or the political calculations involved. Al-Wāqidi's account (W, II, 572) attributes the initial inspiration to a dream, but al-Ṭabarī does not include this detail. Under customary Arab religious practice the Meccans should have allowed the pilgrimage. The months of Dhū al-Qa'dah and Dhū al-Ḥijjah were sacred months in which fighting was banned, and Mecca itself was sacred territory throughout the year. However, the Muslims had been known to violate the sacred months, and the attitude of the new religion toward the Meccan sanctuary, bound up as it was with the old pagan dispensation, must have been a matter of question to the Meccans. On the other hand, such a pilgrimage implied that Islam did not intend to do away with Mecca's religious significance and that a *modus vivendi* might even be reached between Mecca and the Muslim community. The extent to which Muḥammad expected the Meccans to come round to his side, now that they had apparently despaired of conquering Medina, cannot be determined

from the account. He traveled in pilgrim garb and brought animals for sacrifice to demonstrate his peaceful intentions, but he also traveled with a large party of men, which, according to one account, was armed. The Meccans put up a show of force and blocked the main road. Muḥammad managed to evade them, cross a difficult pass, and encamp on the border of the Meccan sacred territory, at al-Ḥudaybiyah, but he did not attempt to enter. Messengers came and went between the two sides, and eventually a compromise was reached, although there were tense moments when rumors of Meccan treachery against the Muslim negotiators spread and it seemed that the negotiations would break down. At one such moment, Muḥammad summoned his followers to renew their allegiance to him in what came to be known as "the Pledge of Good Pleasure" (*bay'at al-riḍwān*). The agreement finally reached at al-Ḥudaybiyah between Muḥammad and the Meccans contained something for each side. Muḥammad agreed to a ten-year halt to hostilities against Mecca. The Meccans could therefore resume the caravan trade to Syria on which their economy was based but were bound not to attack the Muslims. In return, they agreed to allow Muḥammad to make the pilgrimage the following year, provided that he came unarmed and stayed only three nights. Muḥammad, for his part, agreed not to accept converts who came from Mecca without the permission of their guardians. In return for this concession, the Meccans agreed to allow any Arab tribes who desired to ally themselves with Muḥammad to do so, even if by implication this meant abandoning a previous alliance with Quraysh. In effect, Muḥammad had extracted recognition as an equal from Quraysh. Although some members of the community showed their disappointment at turning back without entering Mecca, the disappointment gave rise to no organized opposition. The days of the "hypocrites" were over. In any case, a series of expeditions, climaxing in the conquest of the oasis of Khaybar to the north, diverted the attention of the community. In the following year, Muḥammad made the lesser pilgrimage unopposed.

According to the sources used by al-Ṭabarī, within a month after the conclusion of the Treaty of al-Ḥudaybiyah Muḥammad dispatched letters to six foreign rulers, inviting them to become

Muslims. The implication is that the Treaty of al-Hudaybiyah was the beginning of a period of Muslim diplomatic activity. The historical basis of this assumption is unclear. While there is much to suggest that Muḥammad was interested in expanding his sphere of influence northward, which would place him in contact with the Byzantine and Persian spheres of influence; that he received reports of the Byzantine-Persian war then drawing to its conclusion, just as Byzantine intelligence received reports of events in the Arabian peninsula; and that he knew of the usefulness of Arab tributary states to these empires, the actual letters are clearly literary fictions. They are comprehensible from the point of view of Islamic law, in terms of the obligation to summon non-Muslims to Islam before invading their territory, but in their laconic wording they would have been incomprehensible to their recipients. Only one of the letters, that to the Ethiopian negus, contains significant individuating material, however, that material (of a christological nature) uses Qur'ānic language that would have been readily available to later Muslims. The reply by the negus (the only reply quoted), with its offer to come personally, is clearly apocryphal.

Another example of Muḥammad's interest in the north is the expedition that set out for Syria and was defeated by Byzantine troops and their Arab allies at Mu'tah in Jordan during the month of Jumādā I, A.H. 8 (August-September 629). Al-Ṭabarī's account, which relies almost entirely on Ibn Ishāq, says nothing about the causes of the expedition. Al-Wāqidī (W, II, 755) indicates that the immediate occasion was the killing by Shurahbīl b. 'Amr al-Ghassānī (the Banū Ghassān were allies of the Byzantines) of a messenger whom Muḥammad had sent to the ruler of Buṣrā in Syria. Thus, although the motive for this mission to Buṣrā remains a mystery, the immediate motive for the expedition was retaliation. The deaths of Muḥammad's adoptive son Zayd b. Ḥārithah, his cousin Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib, and 'Abdallāh b. Rawāḥah were a blow, but the total Muslim casualties were extremely light. Al-Ṭabarī gives no figures, but al-Wāqidī lists only eight men.

Shortly after the return of the unsuccessful expedition to Mu'tah, the truce of al-Hudaybiyah broke down when violence erupted between the Banū Bakr, allies of Quraysh, and the Banū

Khuzā'ah, allies of Muḥammad. A group of Quraysh armed and supported the Banū Bakr, who killed several of the Banū Khuzā'ah. A tribesman of the Khuzā'ah then made his way to Medina and called on the Muslims for aid. He was favorably received. Realizing the gravity of the situation, Abū Sufyān himself made his way to Medina to attempt to repair the treaty. He was unsuccessful. Soon Muḥammad had set out with an army for Mecca. Further negotiations took place near Mecca between Abū Sufyān and Muḥammad, who was poised to enter Mecca by force. In the end, it was Abū Sufyān who, by accepting Islam and Muḥammad's terms, made it possible for Muḥammad to enter Mecca with a minimum of fighting. The internal politics of Mecca that led Abū Sufyān to make such a volte-face must be pieced together from other historical accounts. Muḥammad did not demand that the Meccans convert to Islam. He promised safety to anyone who entered the area around the Ka'bah, anyone who stayed within the doors of his house, and anyone who took refuge in Abū Sufyān's house. A few diehards fought, a few fled the city, but most of the Meccans accepted the inevitable. Muḥammad entered the city and pronounced a general amnesty, with the exception of six men and four women who were guilty of particular crimes. After a sermon delivered by the door of the Ka'bah, he declared the Meccans "free" (by convention they were legally his slaves as prisoners of war). This was followed by a ceremony in which the Meccans swore allegiance to Muḥammad as Muslims.

Thus, in a period of four years, Muḥammad had gone from being besieged in Medina by the Meccans and their allies to being the master of Mecca. It was a tremendous change of fortune, though one should not exaggerate the extent of his success. Islam had not yet made significant inroads into the tribes of central Arabia, which could pose a threat even to the combined forces of Medina and Mecca, as they did later in A.H. 8 at the battle of Ḥunayn. Muḥammad's religious policy was quite cautious at first. There was no attempt at this date to make the Meccan pilgrimage an exclusively Islamic rite. Pagans were allowed to make the pilgrimage this year and the following year. But the victory of Islam in Arabia, an object of faith alone in A.H. 5, had become a realistic possibility in A.H. 8.

Al-Ṭabarī: His Sources and Methods

As in the earlier sections of his *History* dealing with the life of the Prophet, al-Ṭabarī in this section relies mainly on the biography of the Prophet composed by Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767).¹ Al-Ṭabarī, who was born in A.H. 224 or 225 (winter of A.D. 839), studied the bulk of this material early in his life, when he was a student of Abū 'Abdallāh Muḥammad b. Ḥumayd in Rayy (near modern Tehran). Ibn Ḥumayd had studied the work with Salamah b. al-Faḍl, also of Rayy, who in turn had studied it with the author, Ibn Ishāq. This means that al-Ṭabarī had access to the work in a version antedating the version that has survived to modern times, the abridgment and recension made by 'Abd al-Malik b. Hishām (d. 218/834). The typical *isnād* for al-Ṭabarī's citations therefore runs "Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq," to which al-Ṭabarī frequently appends the *isnād* found in Ibn Ishāq. Al-Ṭabarī also studied other recensions of Ibn Ishāq's work. For example, at page 1630 of the *History* we find the *isnād*, "Abū Kurayb—Yūnus b. Bukayr—Muḥammad b. Ishāq." This refers to al-Ṭabarī's study of Ibn Ishāq's book under the Kūfan scholar Abū Kurayb (d. 248/862), who transmitted the recension made by Yūnus b. Bukayr (d. 199/815). Al-Ṭabarī's citations from Ibn Ishāq are extensive and preserve virtually all the significant material of the original, as comparison with the surviving text of the *Sīrah* will show.

The main other work cited by al-Ṭabarī in this section is the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* by the Medinan historian Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823 in Baghdād). His attitude toward this work was very different from his attitude toward Ibn Ishāq's. In a notice preserved in Yāqūt's biographical encyclopedia, *Irshād al-arīb*,² al-Ṭabarī is quoted as saying that he considered al-Wāqidī unreliable as a transmitter of *ḥadīth* and therefore quoted him in his work on Qur'ānic exegesis only when he referred to "history, biography, or Arab stories" and only when the material could be found only in his work; he quoted no legal traditions from al-Wāqidī. A

1. The work is commonly known by the title *Sīrah* or *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, which is the title of the recension of the work prepared by Ibn Hishām. Ibn Ishāq's original three-volume work was entitled *Kitāb al-maghāzī* and consisted of three parts: *al-Mubtada'*, *al-Mab'ath*, and *al-Maghāzī*. See *EP*², s.v. Ibn Ishāq.

2. Translated in Rosenthal, "General Introduction," p. 110.

comparison between the material from al-Wāqidī quoted in the *History* and the text of the *Kitāb al-maghāzī* demonstrates al-Ṭabarī's cautious use of al-Wāqidī. Al-Ṭabarī rarely quotes al-Wāqidī fully. Many details, sometimes crucial ones, are omitted. I have therefore drawn attention to parallels to al-Wāqidī in the footnotes of my translation. Unfortunately, no English translation of this text exists at the present time.

To the material derived from these two main sources al-Ṭabarī added material derived from his studies with many leading scholars of his time. Franz Rosenthal's "General Introduction" to the first volume of this series is the most convenient place for the English reader to gain an idea of the scope of this material. The work of Fuat Sezgin in the first volume of his *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* should also be consulted for its thorough presentation of the Islamic scholarship on which al-Ṭabarī drew.

A Note on the Text

The translation follows the text of the Leiden edition, which appeared in installments between 1879 and 1898 under the general editorship of M. J. de Goeje. The section here translated (A.H. 5-8) appears in Volume I/3, pages 1460-1654, which was edited by the Dutch scholar Pieter de Jong of Utrecht, after the death in 1881 of Professor Otto Loth of Leipzig, to whom the section was originally assigned. De Jong edited I, 1083-2015. The following manuscripts were available for pages 1460-1654: Istanbul, Köprülü 1042 (siglum C in the *apparatus*), part of a three-volume set copied in Cairo in 651 A.H., covering the entire section; Codex Muir (siglum M) in the British India Office library, covering the section to page 1480; and Codex Spitta (siglum S) in the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, covering the entire section. Thus de Jong had at least two manuscripts for this section, and for the first twenty pages he had three with which to work. In addition, he carefully collated the text with parallel passages in the standard collections of *ḥadīth*, Ibn Hishām, al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr*, the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, and later historians such as Ibn al-Athīr. The result is a text with few real problems.

Al-Ṭabarī's *History* was reedited in Egypt by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (1960), who used the printed Leiden text as a basis

but consulted a few additional manuscripts, none of which contained the text for the section translated here. Nevertheless, I have consulted the Cairo edition for its useful explanatory notes and have noted where its text differs from that of ed. Leiden because of editorial decision or possible misprint.

I have indicated parallel passages, especially in the works of Ibn Hishām and al-Wāqidī, occasionally in other works. I do not pretend that this is a complete list of parallels. Given the selective nature of al-Ṭabarī's work for this period, the historian must supplement it with readings in other surviving Arabic works. In addition to Ibn Hishām and al-Wāqidī, the material on the life of the Prophet in Ibn Sa'd's *Ṭabaqāt* and in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashraf* is particularly rich.

For the conversion of Islamic dates I have used the standard tables of F. Wüstenfeld and E. Mahler. These follow the later Arabic convention of assuming that the present purely lunar Islamic calendar with no intercalated months was in force from the first year of Muḥammad's residence in Medina, almost certainly a false assumption. The custom of intercalating extra months to keep the lunar months in phase with the seasons was followed by the pre-Islamic Arabs, as by the Jews, and was forbidden only in the tenth year of the Hijrah. It is therefore likely that three or four of the Islamic years from 1 to 10 contained an extra month. As we do not know in what years such months were added, we have no way of working out exact correspondences. Furthermore, as the introduction of dating by the Islamic era occurred during the caliphate of 'Umar, the dating of events of the Prophet's lifetime was often a matter on which there was disagreement. This was frequently the case with some of the minor expeditions, which are mentioned by Ibn Hishām without dates in a separate section at the end of the *Sīrah*.

I wish to express my appreciation to four previous translators in this series who blazed a well-marked trail. To use Arabic terminology, I have used their works through *wijādah* (finding them) but without *ijāzah* (license to transmit personally bestowed by a master on a pupil). To Franz Rosenthal of Yale University, the translator of Volume I of this series, all English-speaking students of al-Ṭabarī owe a great debt of gratitude, especially for his masterful "General Introduction." M. V. McDonald and W. Montgomery

Watt, who translated and annotated Volume VII, have done much to clarify the complicated tribal politics of the period. Ismail K. Poonawala, my colleague at the University of California at Los Angeles and the translator of Volume IX, helped especially with the *isnāds*. For the inevitable errors and shortcomings, I alone bear responsibility.

Michael Fishbein

The Last Years of the Prophet

Volume IX

Translated and Annotated by Ismail K. Poonawala

This volume deals with the last two and a half years of the Prophet's life. In addition to the three major expeditions to Hunayn, Ta'if, and Tabuk, it describes in detail the circumstances surrounding the illness from which he died and the subsequent crisis of leadership faced by the nascent Muslim community. The author depicts with admirable fairness all the various opinions and divisions that existed within the community. He also presents a vivid picture of the Prophet's physical appearance, his personal life, and his marriages. Among other topics discussed in this volume are all the deputations that came to Medina; a summary of all the expeditions and raiding parties; and his scribes, freedmen, horses, camels, goats, swords, coats of mail, and so on. It also covers the apostasy of Musaylimah, Aswad, and Tulyahah and the Prophet's attempts to deal with them.

The translation not only preserves the original lively flavor of al-Tabari but also, in its annotations, draws extensively on both parallel Arabic sources and the intensive research of recent years. Readers who seek a deeper understanding of the Prophet's personality and of the reasons for antagonisms engendered among various factions will find this volume most informative.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME IX

The Last Years of the Prophet
THE FORMATION OF THE STATE
A.D. 630-632 / A.H. 8-11



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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME IX

The Last Years of the Prophet

translated and annotated
by

Ismail K. Poonawala

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others which cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Translator's Foreword



This volume covers approximately the last two and a half years of the Prophet's life. Al-Ṭabarī's account is full of graphic details and vivid descriptions which makes it delightful to read. In many instances, the narrative seems as though it must have been experienced directly. The animated dialogues, turns of phrases in reported speech, moments of humor—all these seem redolent of his literary talent. An effort has been made in the translation to preserve the original flavor without sacrificing the English idiom.

Al-Ṭabarī's account of this period is derived mainly from Ibn Ishāq's (d. ca. 150/767) *Sīrah*, one of the main sources for the subject. The original version of the *Sīrah*, which was transmitted through several *riwāyahs*, did not survive.* What we have is an abbreviated, annotated version edited by Ibn Hishām (d. ca. 218/833) based on the *riwāyah* of Ziyād al-Bakkā'ī (d. 183/799), who lived in al-Kūfah. The *Sīrah* version used by al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, is based on the *riwāyah* of Salamah b. Faḍl al-Abrash al-Anṣārī (d. 191/806), who lived in al-Rayy. This explains the variants, as al-Ṭabarī's text is carefully collated with Ibn Hishām's *Sīrah*. Despite a number of variants and some minor additions and omissions, it is worth noting that, on the whole, there is remarkable agreement between the two *riwāyahs*. The stories of

*Segments of this original work found in the Qarawiyyīn library of Fez (transmitted through the *riwāyah* of Yūnus b. Bukayr), and the Zāhiriyyah library of Damascus (transmitted through the *riwāyah* of Muḥammad b. Salamah al-Ḥarrānī), edited by Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh, have been consulted and collated.

Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī and 'Adī b. Ḥātim al-Ṭayyī', the account of the Tamīm deputation, and the Prophet's letter to the kings of Ḥimyar, are just a few cases in point.

Al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823) is another authority very frequently quoted by al-Ṭabarī. All these references are collated with his *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*. The latter provides more details, especially about the expeditions. The story of 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd al-Thaqafī, who came to the Prophet and accepted Islam after the siege of al-Ṭā'if, is also more graphically depicted. It is from al-Wāqidi that we learn that the people were not happy when the Prophet decided to end the siege of al-Ṭā'if and depart without the victory. He further states that they had to be persuaded by Abū Bakr and 'Umar that the Prophet in so doing was merely acting under divine instructions. All the verses revealed about the expedition of Tabūk are likewise listed separately.

In addition to Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrah* and al-Wāqidi's *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, the translation is collated with Ibn Sa'd's (d. 230/845) *al-Ṭabaqāt*, especially the biography of the Prophet in the first two volumes, and with the first volume of al-Balādhurī's (d. ca. 279/892) *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, dealing with the Prophet's life. A number of other sources, such as Ibn Shabbah's (d. 262/875) *Ta'rīkh al-Madīnah al-munawwarah*, al-Ya'qūbī's (d. 284/897) *Ta'rīkh*, al-Mas'ūdī's (d. 345/956) *Murūj al-dhahab* and *al-Tanbih wa'l-ishrāf*, Ibn al-Athīr's (d. 630/1233) *al-Kāmil*, and Ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) *al-Sīrah* have been consulted. All the major variants as well as additions in the above sources have been noted in the footnotes. Minor variants of verbal forms, prepositions, and differences of words of nearly the same meaning, which do not radically affect the translation, have been ignored. Full references to Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidi, Ibn Sa'd, and al-Balādhurī are given at the first citation in each context. Although I have benefitted greatly by A. Guillaume's translation of the *Sīrah*, it is not referred to in the footnotes simply to save space, except where the comments are made expressly by him.

Most of the authorities listed in the *isnāds* are identified from the standard biographical dictionaries, such as Ibn Sa'd's *al-Ṭabaqāt*; Dhahabī's (d. 748/1347) *al-Ibar*, *Mizān*, and *Tadhkirah*; and Ibn Hajar's (d. 852/1449) *al-Iṣābah*, *Tahdhīb*, and *Lisān*. All the geographical areas and place names have likewise been identified

from the works of al-Hamdānī (d. 334/945), al-Bakrī (d. 487/1094), and Yāqūt (d. 626/1229). Genealogies of the tribes and clans have been verified from the works of Hishām al-Kalbī (d. ca. 204/819) and Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064). For historical geography and topography, recent works of A. Musil, H. Sr. J. B. Philby, H. al-Jāsir, and A. al-Wohaibi have been consulted. For the life of the Prophet, the biographies of F. Buhl, T. Andrae, W. M. Watt, M. Gaudefroy-Demombynes, and M. Rodinson have been referred to. On disputed questions, every effort has been made to cite the latest opinion or interpretation.

Finally, I would like to thank Vincent Cornell for reading a major part of the translation, and for giving his thoughtful suggestions, amendations, and criticisms. I also wish to thank Hasanuddin Hashmi for elucidating some difficult and obscure passages. For any inadequacies, I alone am responsible.

I would like to thank Ahmed Nassef and Mohammad Atho Mudzhar for their help in proofreading.

February 20, 1987
Los Angeles, California

Ismail K. Poonawala

The Conquest of Arabia
Volume X
Translated by Fred M. Donner

Volume X of al-Ṭabarī's massive chronicle is devoted to two main subjects. The first is the selection of Abū Bakr as the first caliph or successor to the Prophet Muḥammad following the Prophet's death in 632 C.E. This section of the *History* reveals some of the inner divisions that existed within the early Muslim community and sheds light on the interests and motivations of various parties in the debates that led up to Abū Bakr's acclamation as caliph.

The second main subject of Volume X is the *riddah* or "apostasy"—actually a series of rebellions against Muslim domination by various tribes in Arabia that wished to break their ties with Medina following the Prophet's death. The *History* offers one of the more extensive collections of accounts about this early sequence of events to be found in the Arabic historical literature. It provides richly detailed information on the rebellions themselves and on the efforts made by Abū Bakr and his Muslim supporters to quell them. It also tells us much about relationships among the tribes of Arabia, local topography, military practice, and the key personnel, organization, and structure of the early Islamic state.

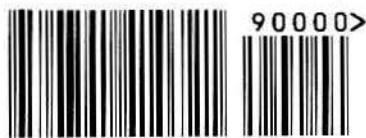
The successful suppression of the *riddah* marked the transformation of the Muslim state from a small faith community of importance only in West Arabia to a much more powerful political entity, embracing all of the Arabian peninsula and poised to unleash a wave of conquests that would shortly engulf the entire Near East and North Africa. The *riddah era* is, thus, crucial to understanding the eventual appearance of Islam as a major actor on the stage of world history.

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Said Amir Arjomand, Editor

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME X

The Conquest of Arabia

THE RIDDAH WARS

A.D. 632–633 / A.H. 11



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME X

The Conquest of Arabia

translated and annotated
by

Fred M. Donner

The University of Chicago

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into thirty-eight volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by

only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



Aghānī: al-Iṣfahānī, 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, *Kitāb al-aghānī*

B: Berlin Mss. of al-Ṭabarī (nos. 9414–22), used by editors of Leiden edition; Ms. 9416 covers the *riddah*

BGA: *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum*

C: Istanbul ("Constantinople") Ms. Köprülü 1040 of al-Ṭabarī, used by editors of Leiden edition

Cairo: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, Cairo edition

El²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–

Emendanda: M. J. De Goeje, *Annales quod scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir al-Ṭabarī: Introduction, Glossarium, Addenda et Emendanda*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1901, p. DLXXIII–DCCCIII

Glossary: M. J. De Goeje, *Annales quod scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed ibn Djarir al-Ṭabarī: Introduction, Glossarium, Addenda et Emendanda*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1901, p. CI–DLXXII

IK: Possibly a reference to passages in Ibn Khallikān's *Wafāyāt al-a'yān* cited by P. De Jong, editor of this section of text in the Leiden edition. In the introduction to the Leiden edition (see *Glossary*, p. LXIII) Ibn Khallikān is mentioned in the *stemma* of manuscripts, but no mention of Ibn Khallikān or any other source to which the siglum IK might refer is included in discussion of the manuscripts and sources used by De Jong (pp. LII–LIII).

Kos: J. K. L. Kosegarten, ed., Greifswald partial edition of al-Ṭabarī, cited in notes to Leiden edition

TAVO: *Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients*, Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1977–

Text: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, Leiden edition



Translator's Foreword



This volume of al-Ṭabarī's *History*, corresponding to pages 1837–2016 in the prima series of the Leiden edition, covers only part of the year A.H. 11/A.D. 632–33. It is devoted to two main themes: the *saqīfah* incident, during which the young Muslim community selected a leader following the death of Muḥammad, and the wars of the *riddah* or apostasy, during which the first caliph, Abū Bakr, led the government in Medina as it subjected all of Arabia. Some accounts of the *saqīfah* incident are also found at the end of volume IX of the translation (pp. 1820ff. of the text); on the other hand, all al-Ṭabarī's material on the *riddah* wars is included in volume X, constituting the overwhelming bulk of it.

Both the *saqīfah* incident and the *riddah* were crucial events in the development of the early Islamic state. Immediately after the death of the Prophet Muḥammad, the community of Muslims in Medina was in danger of falling apart. Old tribal tensions and rivalries among the Prophet's closest supporters, which the Prophet himself had been able to keep under control by the force of his personality and the authority of his message, threatened to break once again into the open. The Medinan *Anṣār*, or "Helpers" of the Prophet, and the *Muhājirūn*, or "Emigrants" who had come with the Prophet from Mecca, had sometimes felt keen rivalry toward one another. Early converts to Islam and old supporters of the Prophet—both *Muhājirūn* and *Anṣār*—resented some of the late converts from Mecca, who had been shown great favor by the Prophet in his last years, despite

their long and bitter opposition to him and his message. Upon the Prophet's death, some of the leading clans of the Medinan *Anṣār* gathered to plan for their future and were on the verge of selecting one of their number to be leader of the Medinan Muslims, assuming that the Meccan Muslims would choose another chief for themselves. The gathering—which took place on a portico (*saqīfah*) of one of the Medinan clans, hence the name of the incident—was visited by a few of Muḥammad's earliest Meccan followers, who pleaded successfully for a unified leadership. The result was the acclamation of Abū Bakr, an early Meccan convert and close confidant of the Prophet, to be the first caliph (*khalīfah* "successor," sometimes "vicegerent").

In agreeing to recognize Abū Bakr as their leader following the Prophet's death, the Muslims also decided that they were to continue not only as a religious community but also as a unified polity. This decision was of the utmost importance. Had they decided otherwise, it is fair to assume that Islam would never have spread as it did, for the initial Islamic conquest movement was not primarily the expansion of a new faith, but rather the expansion of a new state—albeit a state whose coalescence was intimately linked with the new faith, which would come to be called Islam. It was under the shelter of this state ruled by Muslims that Islam first struck deep roots outside Arabian soil; without this shelter, Islam might well have remained a purely local Arabian cult, very different from what it eventually became as a result of its later evolution in the highly cultured regions of Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and Iran.

If the *saqīfah* incident can be taken as the moment when Muslims committed themselves to being a unified political community, the *riddah* wars can be seen as the first test of that commitment. Even as the core of the Muslim community—the Prophet's Meccan and Medinan followers—was deciding to remain under united leadership, many other groups whom the Prophet had brought into his community in various parts of Arabia were deciding to end their submission to Medina. Some tribes claimed that they wished to remain Muslims in the religious sense—by performing prayer, for example—but would not send to Abū Bakr the tax payments that Muḥammad had requested of them in his last years. Others repudiated both the

political and the religious leadership of Medina; they wished simply to go their own way, now that the Prophet was dead, in some cases choosing to follow other figures who claimed, like Muḥammad, to be prophets (and whom the Muslim tradition, naturally, condemns as "false prophets"). Still others, it seems, hoped simply to take advantage of the turmoil in Medina to raid the town, enriching themselves with plunder and ending what they perhaps felt to be vexatious demands for tribute. All of these movements are termed *riddah* "apostasy" by the Muslim sources, even in cases where the opponents of Medina showed no desire to repudiate the religious aspects of the faith. Abū Bakr vowed to fight them all until they were subdued and dispatched several armies to deal with the main rebellions. Indeed, the campaigns did not limit themselves to the reconquest of Arabian tribes that had previously had some contact with Muḥammad; they spilled over the whole of Arabia, and many tribes and groups that had had no contact with the Prophet at all, and who certainly had not been allied to or subjected by him, were conquered for the first time. The Arabic sources classify these wars, too, as wars against the *riddah*, even though they involved neither apostasy nor rebellion—only resistance to expansion of the new Islamic state based in Medina.¹ The *riddah* wars constitute, in effect, the first chapter in the early Islamic conquest movement that led to the establishment throughout the Near East of a new imperial state ruled by Arabian Muslims.

The large amount of space that al-Ṭabarī dedicated to the *riddah* wars reflects the importance accorded the *riddah* theme in early Islamic historiography. It was a theme closely related to the theme of *futūḥ* (conquest by the Islamic state), which dominates the next several volumes in this translation of al-Ṭabarī. Both the *riddah* and the *futūḥ* were seen retrospectively by Muslims as signs of God's favor for the new Islamic faith, which is why they became such central themes in early Islamic historiography. But, unlike the *futūḥ* theme, the secondary

1. There are occasional passages where this classification is not enforced, however; e.g., I, 1961 top (from Sayf), which carefully distinguishes "apostates" from "non-apostates who were still unbelievers."

purpose of which was to explain and justify the Muslims' sovereignty over their non-Muslim subjects, the *riddah* theme was intended to affirm the superiority of the companions of the Prophet (*ṣaḥābah*) and of certain tribes and lineages over others.

In relating the stories of the *saqīfah* and the *riddah*, al-Ṭabarī relied on existing narratives conveyed to him by his predecessors in the historiographical enterprise—above all on the Kūfan compiler Sayf b. 'Umar, whose accounts make up about 90 percent of this volume. As in other parts of al-Ṭabarī's history, then, very little in this volume represents original material written by al-Ṭabarī himself. This approach is hardly surprising, for al-Ṭabarī was first and foremost a traditionist and subscribed to the principle that true knowledge was what had been received via sound transmission from reliable earlier authorities, who had been closer to the events described. In the face of such transmitted evidence, al-Ṭabarī would have argued, what could later ideas made without support of sound transmission be but rank speculation? This does not mean, however, that al-Ṭabarī simply repeats everything he receives from his predecessors or that he had no point of view of his own. On the contrary, it seems clear that al-Ṭabarī screened his accounts carefully and so projected his particular interpretation of events by editorial manipulation, arrangement, and omission.²

Because of this method, al-Ṭabarī's point of view often becomes clear only when his treatment of a particular episode is compared with that of other compilers. For example, in relating the episode of Mālik b. Nuwayrah and the tribe of Tamīm, al-Ṭabarī tells us relatively little about how Mālik, who had been appointed tax agent over the Banū Ḥanzalah by the Prophet, came to be considered a quasi-apostate and how he earned his nickname "al-Jafūl." These things are related much more fully by other compilers, like al-Diyārbakrī and al-Balansī. On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī dwells at length on Mālik's eventual death while captive in the hands of the troops of Khālīd b. al-Walīd. He also focuses on Khālīd's hasty marriage with Mālik's widow, on

2. On this aspect of al-Ṭabarī's editorial work, see the pioneering study by M. G. S. Hodgson, "Two Pre-Modern Muslim Historians."

the angry reaction of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to this act, and on Abū Bakr's handling of the case. The latter issues are legal and political ones but, above all, questions of personal morality and its relation to political authority, which often seems to be what interested al-Ṭabarī most. When compared with the accounts in al-Balansī (pp. 50ff.), for example, al-Ṭabarī's narratives, derived from Sayf b. 'Umar, read like an effort to divert the reader's attention from the questionable behavior of Mālik b. Nuwayrah that led to his captivity in the first place. This might be considered simply another example of Sayf's desire to exculpate his tribe, Tamim, for responsibility for the *riddah*, as noted long ago by Wellhausen.³ On the other hand, Sayf's account—unlike that in al-Balansī—also exonerates Khālid b. al-Walīd from direct personal responsibility for killing Mālik. The point here is not to show that one or another of these alternative points of view is better but simply to demonstrate how al-Ṭabarī and other authors were able to guide their readers' attention to the issues—and perhaps, to the conclusions—that they wished by means of editorial manipulation and selection.

Al-Ṭabarī uses the "cut and paste" method of *khavar* history,⁴ in which discrete accounts (*akhbār*, sing. *khavar*) on specific events are arranged one after another to provide fuller treatment of events. Because synthetic reformulation of material from various sources is eschewed, the compilation often suffers from poor coordination of the narrative and contains little, if any, analysis at all. For example, al-Ṭabarī likes to begin his examination of the *riddah* of a particular tribe (person, group) by relating what contacts, if any, that tribe had had with the Prophet Muḥammad and Islam before the Prophet's death. This material is presumably included to establish for certain that the tribesmen were, in fact, apostates who had given up the true faith after having acknowledged it. However, it is often not clearly set off from accounts of the *riddah* proper, so that it may be confusing to the reader, who encounters information about the events of the *riddah* in the year 11 and about events in

3. Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, VI, 1-7.

4. The term is that of F. Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (2nd ed. Leiden: 1968), pp. 66ff.

earlier years jumbled together in successive *akhbār*.⁵ In other instances, the straitjacket of *khavar* history sometimes leads al-Ṭabarī to mention in an incidental way characters who only later receive a proper introduction into the narrative. For example, in relating Ṭulayḥah's rebellion, 'Uyaynah b. al-Ḥiṣn is mentioned along with Ṭulayḥah (p. 62, below), without any clarification of who 'Uyaynah was and what role he played in the *riddah*; this comes only later (p. 68, below). As a given body of material may be covered in several different *akhbār*, moreover, overlaps, repetitions, verbatim repeats, and the like are common, even in different accounts by one and the same transmitter.⁶ Of course, between accounts related on the authority of different transmitters, overlaps are often multiple and extensive.

The disjointed nature of al-Ṭabarī's presentation becomes especially clear when we compare his text with others in search of parallels. Frequently, al-Ṭabarī's accounts do not provide a very complete or balanced overview of a particular event from the narrative point of view. His accounts of the battles at Buzākhah, Butāḥ, and even al-Yamāmah, though including much, also leave out much, knowledge of which is nonetheless implied or assumed in the accounts he does include. This means that accounts in other sources often provide the key to understanding the meaning of obscure or elliptical references in al-Ṭabarī's narratives.

On the other hand, al-Ṭabarī also sometimes includes material not found elsewhere; for example, his several accounts comparing miracles performed by the Prophet with failed efforts by Musaylimah to duplicate them (p. 110, below, from Sayf) do not occur in the other sources I have consulted.

Al-Ṭabarī's heavy reliance on the narratives of Sayf b. 'Umar in recounting the events of this volume warrants some comment here. Sayf has been severely criticized by Wellhausen and other scholars for the apparent tribal chauvinism and chronological absurdity of his accounts, which these scholars

5. See, for example, I, 1892-93 on Tulayhah's rebellion and its background.

6. An example is the phrase *bi'sa 'awadtum anfusakum*, introduced in two accounts of Ibn Ishāq, at pp. 118 and 122, below.

have dismissed as "historical novels" of little value to the modern historian.⁷ Recently, a number of scholars have softened this criticism considerably, arguing that some of Sayf's presumed shortcomings are merely reflections of the kind of popular narrative he collected, that the chronology of other authors has little more claim to veracity than that of Sayf, and that his narratives do not so much contradict accounts by other transmitters, as they complement them by viewing events from a completely different vantage point.⁸

Sayf's narratives on the *riddah* (and on the conquests to follow) were evidently the fullest available to al-Ṭabarī. Other transmitters, like Ibn Ishāq and Abū Mikhnaf, also provided al-Ṭabarī with some material, but its bulk is dwarfed by that coming via Sayf. It may be that al-Ṭabarī preferred Sayf's material because it conformed to the political and theological perspective that he himself wished to convey.⁹ On the other hand, we must recall that al-Ṭabarī, as a traditionist, would have insisted that his sources meet the strict standards imposed by traditionists in evaluating transmitted material; one of his main purposes in writing his history seems to have been to establish the writing of history on the same systematic basis found in the study of *ḥadīth*, where the study of transmitted accounts had first been scientifically pursued. Al-Ṭabarī's heavy reliance on Sayf's material, then, can in some measure be taken as an affirmation of its perceived reliability in the eyes of one of the leading intellectual figures of the day.

Al-Ṭabarī's fondness for Sayf poses a definite handicap for the translator, however, because Sayf's narratives are frequently much more difficult to understand—and hence to translate—than those of other transmitters. The accounts of Ibn Ishāq or of

7. E.g., Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, VI, pp. 1–7; M. J. De Goeje, *Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie*; Murtaḍā al-'Askarī, *Khamsūn wa mi'ah saḥābi mukhtalaq*.

8. On chronology, see Donner, *Conquests*, pp. 142ff. Landau-Tasseron, "Sayf b. 'Umar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship," surveys the literature on Sayf and offers several cogent reasons why his compilations deserve serious consideration as sources.

9. On this aspect of al-Ṭabarī's selection of material, see Donner, "The Problem of Early Arabic Historiography in Syria," esp. pp. 21ff.

Ibn al-Kalbī (from Abū Mikhnaḥ), for example, often come as welcome interludes of lucidity amid long stretches of Sayf's vexing prose. Without going into great detail, we can note five specific features of Sayf's prose style that make it especially difficult.¹⁰ First, Sayf's narratives often include elliptical phrases that can be virtually opaque unless the fuller context to which the phrase refers is known from another account. Related to this is his penchant for using numerous pronouns in long passages, leaving it unclear at times who or what the antecedent of the various pronouns may be. Second, Sayf sometimes uses a verb in one form to signify an action usually referred to by a verb of another form, for example *wā'ada bi-* (III) for "to threaten" instead of the usual *aw'ada bi-* (IV).¹¹ Third, he sometimes employs known words with unknown meanings or with prepositions not associated with them in the dictionaries.¹² Fourth, verb and subject sometimes seem not in grammatical agreement, or verbs have no apparent subject. Fifth, Sayf sometimes seems to use certain particles, like *hattā*, *thumma*, etc., with unorthodox meanings.¹³

These and other anomalies of Sayf's narrative style may be more than just a headache for the translator, however; they may also be clues to the origins of his material. For they suggest that Sayf was not engaged mainly in polishing his narratives into an acceptable literary style but was, rather, intent on relating a variety of stories he had collected from informants hailing from diverse tribes—tribes whose differing dialects may be responsible for the grammatical and stylistic anomalies of Sayf's accounts. We have seen that Sayf was criticized harshly by Wellhausen for presenting a picture of events that favored his own tribe of Tamīm, but the chains of informants Sayf prefaces

10. The following observations are impressionistic and not meant to be either conclusive or exhaustive.

11. This occurs at p. 72. Cf. *ijṭāza 'alā* (p. 92), meaning "to commit aggression against," instead of the usual *jāwaza 'alā*; *kharrata 'alā* (p. 125), cf. dictionaries' *ikhtaraṭa* "to draw [the sword]"; *aqāma li* (p. 146) "to resist (?)."

12. E.g., *istabra'a* (p. 105) "to mop up" in military context (?); *ramā bi-* (p. 92) "to shoot" [someone]; *intalaqa bi-* (p. 110) "to take [something] away"; *ikhtalafa bayna* (p. 97) "to serve as intermediary between."

13. E.g., pp. 110, 57 bottom, *thumma* as "so, so that."

to his accounts reveal that his informants came from many tribes in addition to Tamīm, and it seems likely that Sayf (or some of his immediate informants) made a concerted effort to collect tribal oral traditions that had never been written down. Other clues, too, point to possible oral origins of much of Sayf's narrated material—not only the generally rough and disjointed nature of the overall compilation but also such details as occasional lapses into the "narrative present" in tales otherwise couched in the past.¹⁴

Sayf's rendition of the *riddah* in the Yemen offers an interesting case in point. In general, the section is very confusing, as the material on al-Aswad's rebellion is related in tandem with material on the Prophet's appointment of tax agents and his death in a way that makes the chronological relationship of the different events quite unclear. In fact, al-Ṭabarī includes not one but two quite lengthy narrations of the beginnings of the *riddah* in the Yemen on Sayf's authority (pp. 18–34, 34–38), and, though these two versions of Sayf's have many common features (enough to make each of some help in decoding the other), they also display considerable divergence in detail.¹⁵ Both are cast in an unusually problematic Arabic, and it seems likely that we are faced here with two oral variants of a common tribal tradition about the killing of al-Aswad.

Given the frequent difficulties of Sayf's Arabic, the search for close parallels to his accounts in texts other than al-Ṭabarī offers the hope of finding clearer wordings for awkward phrases. What is most interesting, however, is that the search for parallels reveals that Sayf's Arabic was almost as problematic to medieval

14. E.g., p. 179, where Sayf has the imperfect, *lā tuḥdithu . . . , lā tajidu . . .* It is worth noting that Ibn al-Athīr's almost verbatim quote from this passage (*Kāmil*, II, 380) changes the verbs from the imperfect (denoting incomplete action) to the jussive (denoting completed action): *lam yuḥdith . . . lam yajid . . .*

15. There is actually a third summary of events on Sayf's authority at pp. 158–61, but it is very different from the two noted above.

16. Cf. Balādhuri, *Futūḥ*, pp. 94ff., on the apostasy of *al-'arab*, referring to the largely nomadic groups of Sulaym, 'Amir b. Ṣaṣa'ah, Asad, Fazārah, Tamīm, etc., but with separate sections on the apostasy of Kindah and al-Aswad al-'Ansī and his followers, both groups of sedentary people. Cf. also Balansī, 5, where the *muhājirūn* say to Abū Bakr, when Usāmah is away, "We don't have the power to fight the Arabs," referring to the nomads of Fazārah.

Arab historians as it is to us. This offers us only the cold comfort of knowing that our problem in deciphering a given passage lies more with the text than it does with our knowledge of classical Arabic; for the parallels often do not assist us at all in our goal of achieving a satisfactory translation of al-Ṭabarī's text.

Passages in most authors who deal with the *riddah* were only occasionally useful in clarifying the precise wording of a passage but were frequently helpful in clarifying the general context of events. Most useful in this respect were al-Balansī, al-Diyārbakrī, and al-Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-buldān*. The longest sustained parallel to al-Ṭabarī's text on the *riddah* is provided by Ibn al-Athīr in his *al-Kāmil fī al-tārīkh*, for he relied heavily (indeed, almost exclusively) on al-Ṭabarī for his account. According to De Goeje's *stemma* of the manuscripts of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Athīr relied on an earlier manuscript, now lost, that was also the source for the Berlin, Oxford, and one of the Istanbul manuscripts on which the Leiden edition of the text was partially based. Ibn al-Athīr is thus occasionally helpful but more frequently frustrating; though long, straightforward passages from al-Ṭabarī are quoted by him verbatim, problematic passages are often simply dropped altogether, and the remnants harmonized into a plausible narrative or condensed in summaries that, though clear in meaning, really represent merely Ibn al-Athīr's commentary on what al-Ṭabarī's text might have meant. Moreover, we do not always agree with Ibn al-Athīr's judgment; at p. 107, for example, Ibn al-Athīr fills in the subject of the phrase *wa kāna yantahī ilā amri-hi* as Musaylima, but it seems to me more likely to refer to Nahār "al-Rajjāl."

Of course, Ibn al-Athīr's evasion of many textual difficulties means that the manuscript he used already contained many of the same problems we face. This may, of course, simply be the result of corruptions creeping into the text in the manner normal in a manuscript tradition, but I think that it is really further evidence that the texts on the *riddah*, particularly those related from Sayf, are in fact archaic—in both origin and language—and hence not well understood already in al-Ṭabarī's day, much less in Ibn al-Athīr's. The fact that virtually all the really problematic spots occur in Sayf's narratives, rather than in

those related by other informants, argues against the random hand of manuscript corruption as the source of most difficulties.

Volume 19 of the Cairo (1975) edition of al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* also has a long section on the *riddah* that is derived, primarily, from al-Ṭabarī. Although a few of al-Nuwayrī's circumlocutions are helpful in establishing the sense of al-Ṭabarī's text, he seems even more determined than Ibn al-Athīr to evade opaque passages.

The problematic nature of many passages in the text has had several practical implications. First and foremost, of course, it means that the translation offered here can be considered only a provisional one. We can hope that someday, when scholars have undertaken a much more thorough examination of the text on the basis of all available manuscripts (and perhaps even on the basis of new manuscripts yet to be discovered), a much surer edition of the text can be prepared, on the basis of which a definitive translation can be prepared. In the meantime, readers must be warned that, despite my efforts and those of several very learned Arabists who kindly agreed to consider rough passages with me, there remains considerable scope for distortion or outright error in this translation.

A second practical implication of the text's complexity is that instead of noting all the many manuscript variants noted by the Leiden edition, I have chosen only a few that seemed to me significant in clarifying the meaning of the passage or in suggesting a plausible different meaning. The reason for this is simply the sheer number of manuscript variants—sometimes exceeding twenty per page. To have included all of them would have added at least two thousand additional notes to the volume, most of little consequence for the translation. The Arabist who uses the translation, however, and who is interested in a particular passage of text must still refer back to the Arabic text itself to see whether or not some variant that I have not noted may bear important implications for his or her work.

I have been most fortunate to have had the kind assistance of several very learned colleagues, who reviewed my translation of problematic passages and suggested a large number of changes. First and foremost I wish to thank Dr. Ella Landau-Tasseron of the Hebrew University, a fine Arabist and without doubt the

leading specialist on the history of the *riddah* in our generation of scholars. With the careful attention she displays in all her work, she reconsidered many thorny passages and offered extensive and meticulously detailed corrections and improvements, both linguistic and historical. My colleagues at Chicago, Dr. Farouk Mustafa and Dr. Wadad al-Qadi, sat with me for many hours and helped me to gain a better understanding of many passages (particularly of poetry) the import of which, or some important nuance of which, had escaped me in part or completely. To all of them I offer my heartfelt thanks for having so generously shared their time (so limited) and knowledge (so extensive) in a way that has immeasurably improved the reliability and accuracy of the translation presented here. As none of these colleagues reviewed the entire text of the translation, however, the errors and oversights that doubtless remain in it must redden my ears alone. I also wish to thank my editor, Dr. Estelle Whelan, who saw this volume through the press.

In closing, I list a few relatively common words, the translation of which from classical Arabic is often problematic, with my explanation of the way I have translated them (or, in some cases, refused to do so). I hope this may help Arabists and general readers alike to get a better sense of some passages where these words are used.

al-'arab. I have generally rendered this simply as "Arabs," but the word does not, of course, have the modern nationalist meaning, which has been known only since the nineteenth century. Rather, it means either "nomads," that is, nonsedentary pastoral people,¹⁶ or "speakers of Arabic"; not infrequently, the text is ambiguous as to which meaning is intended, for which reason it seemed advisable to leave the term untranslated.

amr. The basic meaning is either "affair, matter" or "order, command," but it is used in a wide variety of contexts and so requires very flexible rendering. It is variously translated "situation," "cause," "purpose," "something," "leadership," or "authority."

al-nās. Basically "people" (according to *Glossary*, actually "chiefs, noblemen" or "horsemen"), in many cases it is

best translated "the army," always referring to one's own side.

al-qawm. Basically "group, tribe, people," it often means "the enemy," that is, the other side.

dīn. Sometimes rendered "religion," e.g. *dīn Allāh*, p. 56, but sometimes, especially in political contexts, best rendered "obedience." At times *dīn Allāh* seems to mean "obedience to God," especially when *dīn* is juxtaposed with *islām* "submission," as on p. 57.

Fred M. Donner

The Challenge to the Empires
Volume XI
Translated by Khalid Yahya Blankinship

Although this volume deals with the part of al-Ṭabarī's History covering the years 12 and 13 (633-35), in the caliphates of Abū Bakr al-Siddīq and 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the narratives contained in it, which are lengthy and detailed, are concerned with the first Muslim conquests in Iraq and Syria. Although it might be expected, therefore, that this volume would be a basic source for these conquests, the actual value of the bulk of the reported traditions is in considerable doubt because most of the material is derived from a later Kūfan traditionist, Sayf b. 'Umar (d. 170-93/786-809), who apparently exaggerated and distorted his material considerably. Indeed, Sayf's transmissions clearly reveal the tendency of his party, an anti-Shī'ite faction based on the Arab Mudar tribal group in al-Kūfah that had lost out with the fall of the Umayyads and the coming of the 'Abbāsids to power. Although Sayf's transmissions thus have limited value as far as the earliest conquests themselves are concerned, they are of the utmost value in revealing the content and character of Islamic historical debates in the late 2nd/8th century. In addition, they permit us to elucidate and reconstruct an early harmonizing tendency in Islam that undoubtedly had a significant effect on the way later Muslims viewed their earliest history.

The translation is preceded by an introduction analyzing the tendencies of Sayf and his party as revealed in this volume. Extensive notes accompany the text for the benefit of historians in other fields, as well as of Islamic specialists.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XI

The Challenge to the Empires

A.D. 633–635/A.H. 12–13



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XI

The Challenge to the Empires

translated and annotated
by

Khalid Yahya Blankinship

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into thirty-nine volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Abbreviations



CHI: The Cambridge History of Iran. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968-.

EI¹: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 4 volumes and supplement. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1913-38.

EI²: The Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd ed. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954-.

GAS: F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967-.



Translator's Foreword



This volume of al-Ṭabarī's history covers the years 12–13 A.H. (633–35 C.E.), including most of the reign of the caliph Abū Bakr (reigned 11–13/632–34) and the beginning of that of the caliph 'Umar (reigned 13–23/634–44). It thus deals with one of the most crucial points in the history of Islam, when the early Medinan state established by the Prophet Muḥammad was transformed into a much larger empire through the Muslim conquest of the Fertile Crescent. Because the whole volume is devoted exclusively to only two years of history, one would expect its accounts to be more detailed than other parts of al-Ṭabarī, and indeed they are. They are also far more detailed than most other early, partially independent accounts that have come down to us, such as those of Ibn Khayyāt (d. 240/854), al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892), and al-Ya'qūbī (d. 282/895). As a result, the material contained in this volume constitutes one of the most important of the basic sources that must be considered for the early Islamic conquests, for the bulk of the volume is concentrated exclusively on the earliest Muslim military campaigns in the Fertile Crescent.

These campaigns fall into two distinct sections: the campaigns against the Persians in Iraq (pp. 1–70, 116–24, 173–224, total 128 pages) and those against the Romans in Syria (pp. 73–116, 124–29, 158–73, total 63 pages). Most of the reports consist of long, detailed prose descriptions of various battles; poetry is scarce. However, there is also occasional information about the peace terms agreed to by the conquered populations and other administrative arrangements subsequent to the conquest. The reports dealing with Iraq

provide details on the exploits of the renowned Khālid b. al-Walid, who first subdued the region around the future al-Baṣrah in the south (pp. 1, 7–19), then conquered the vicinity of al-Ḥirah, near the future al-Kūfah in the center (pp. 2–7, 19–57, 70), and finally took the outlying areas of Dūmat al-Jandal (pp. 57–60, 70) and the Euphrates River up to the Roman border (pp. 60–70). Then the Syrian campaign is connected with that of Iraq through a description of Khālid's march through the desert to Syria to reinforce other Muslim troops already there (pp. 109–17, 122–26). As with the Iraqi campaigns, the invasion of Syria is treated as a series of thinly connected episodes built up around the individual battles fought there: al-Yarmūk (pp. 83–104), Marj al-Šuffar (pp. 81–83, 109), Ajnādayn (pp. 126–29), Fihl (pp. 160–65, 170–72), and the siege of Damascus (pp. 160–61, 165–69). Some information is also offered about subsequent administrative arrangements. Finally, the scene returns to campaigns and countercampaigns on the central front in Iraq (pp. 116–22, 173–224), building toward the decisive Battle of al-Qādiyyah, which is covered in the next volume of this series, Volume XII.

It is important that the reader note that for several of the battles or campaigns described in this volume alternative versions appear only in Volume XII. They include the campaigns of al-Ubullah (Volume XII, pp. 161–72), al-Yarmūk (pp. 132–35), and Ajnādayn (pp. 185–89). These passages also must be consulted to obtain a complete picture of the information that al-Ṭabari has to offer on the earliest conquests.

Most of the twenty pages in this volume that are not concerned with campaigns in Iraq and Syria contain miscellaneous accounts inserted on the occasion of Abū Bakr's death. They include the notice on the caliph's death itself (pp. 129–38), personal biographical notes about him (pp. 138–41, 149–53), a listing of his officials (pp. 142–45), and reports on his appointment of ʿUmar as his successor (pp. 145–49). Finally, very short notices appended at the end of each year list governors, leaders of the pilgrimage, and deaths of a few notables (pp. 70–72, 224–25). The volume contains little material on the establishment of the basic institutions of the Islamic caliphate, which must have been in process at the time. Whatever administrative, social, and economic information may be found occurs only incidentally.

Although the reports in this volume are quite detailed for what they do cover, they must be carefully scrutinized for their sources and content before we can be satisfied that they do in fact contain accurate information, as the better part of three centuries separated al-Ṭabarī, who died in 310 (923), from the events he described here. Although he scrupulously cited his sources and can be shown to have often quoted from them almost verbatim, these sources themselves can be traced with certainty only to an earlier stage in the collection of Islamic history, represented by the writers Ibn Ishāq (d. 151/767), Ibn al-Kalbī (d. 204/819), al-Wāqidī (d. 207/822), and Sayf b. 'Umar (d. 170–93/786–809). From the first three, all of whom are cited in this volume, there are works extant that enable us to assess their tendencies to some extent, as well as to verify their use of their own sources. For an assessment of the value of their transmissions, the reader is referred to the relevant articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and other secondary literature.

It is the fourth writer extensively quoted by al-Ṭabarī, Sayf b. 'Umar, with whom we are mainly concerned here. As his work survives principally in the transmission of al-Ṭabarī and those who took from him and is found nowhere in independent form, he has unfortunately been rather ignored in modern criticism. Yet it is Sayf's lengthy reports that fill most of the pages of this and several other volumes. The historical evaluation of this volume therefore depends to a large extent on our assessment of the nature of Sayf's reports and al-Ṭabarī's use of them, and it is to these problems that we must turn our attention.

Abū 'Abdallāh Sayf b. 'Umar al-USayyidī al-Tamīmī was a Kūfan traditionist who died in the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd (170–93/786–809).¹ Other than the possibility that he was accused of *zandaqah* (Manichaeism) in the inquisition (*miḥnah*) that began under al-Mahdī in 166 (783) and continued into the time of al-Rashīd,² nothing is known of his life, except what can be determined from his traditions. As he is alleged to have transmitted from at least nine

1. The sources on Sayf include the following: Ibn Abī Hātim, *Jarḥ*, II/1, 278; Ibn Hībān, *Majrūhīn*, I, 345; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 106; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, II, 255; Šafādī, *Wāfi*, XVI, 66; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 295–96.

2. On the *miḥnah* itself, see Ṭabarī, III, 517, 522, 548–51, 604, 645; Vajda, "Zindiqs," 173–229. On the accusation against Sayf, see Ibn Hībān, *Majrūhīn*, I, 345–46; Dhahabī, *Mizān*, II, 255–56; Ibn Hajar, *Tahdhīb*, IV, 296.

traditionists who died in 140–46 (757–63), and even from two who died in 126–28 (744–46), he may have been elderly when he died. This is also suggested by the possibility that Abū Mikhnaḥ, who died considerably earlier than Sayf, in 157 (774), may have quoted from him.³ Sayf's work was originally recorded in two books, *Kitāb al-futūḥ al-kabīr wa-al-riddah* and *Kitāb al-jamal wa-masīr 'Ā'ishah wa-'Alī*, which are now lost but survived for a number of centuries after Sayf's own lifetime.⁴ They made an enormous impact on the Islamic historical tradition, especially because al-Ṭabarī chose to rely mainly on them for the events of 11–36 (632–56), a period that spanned the reigns of the first three caliphs and included all the early conquests of Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Iran. Although al-Ṭabarī also quoted other sources in this volume, as we have indicated, the overwhelming bulk of his material for this period is from Sayf. Indeed, it is also probable, though not certain, that he has reproduced the vast majority of Sayf's work. Sayf is only rarely cited by other writers independently of al-Ṭabarī.⁵

Generally, Sayf's description of the conquests transmitted in this and other volumes of al-Ṭabarī emphasizes the heroism of the Muslim warriors, the hardships they endured, and the toughness of their opponents, features that seem plausible enough and are also found in other conquest narratives beside those of Sayf. However, Sayf's narratives differ in the extent to which he introduces traditions not found elsewhere, often reporting them from transmitters not otherwise known. These unique narratives frequently contain fantastic or legendary motifs to an extent far greater than is found in the versions of other historians. Although the fantastic and tendentious nature of Sayf's reports has often been noted, for example, by Julius Wellhausen,⁶ the exact value of his corpus as a primary source has never been assessed in detail.

Clearly, Sayf's exaggerated traditions cannot have been entirely invented by him, for they were intended to be convincing as history to an audience that had a certain knowledge of its own immediate past. Sayf thus has to deal with subjects and personages already familiar to his hearers in ways that would not offend them. This lim-

3. 'Askarī, *Khamsūn wa-mi'ah ṣaḥābī*, 10 n.

4. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 106.

5. One certain instance is Ibn Muzāḥim, *Ṣiffīn*, 5–6, 9–10, citing Sayf four times.

6. Wellhausen, *Skizzen*, 3–7.

ited the possibilities of invention. Furthermore, the very exaggerated nature of Sayf's traditions suggests a preceding period of oral transmission. As Sayf himself was clearly a writer of prose compositions, it is most unlikely that the characteristics suggesting oral transmission are his own contribution; it is more probable that they go back to his sources.

The exaggerated language characteristic of oral transmission in Sayf is especially apparent in the narratives of the conquest of Iraq, which have a clear tribal origin and bias. These narratives can be traced mostly to two rival groups, the Rabī'ah and the Tamīm, whose enmity had originated in pre-Islamic times. That Sayf should present the traditions of the Raba'ī opponents of his own Tamīmī tribal group might appear laudably fair and impartial, but he had his own reasons for including them. Probably by Sayf's time the old tribal differences had less impact, as new groups around the 'Abbāsids gained power. The old tribal army divisions that had formed the elite under the Umayyads rapidly lost influence and may have tended to forget their differences and close ranks to hold onto whatever privileges their lineages still entitled them to. Sayf thus may have preferred to bring all tribal traditions together without untoward prejudice, in order to gain a wider hearing.

Another characteristic of Sayf's work that may have been partly derived from the tribal tradition is the favoritism for Iraq that he expressed, and in particular for the city of al-Kūfah. This is hardly surprising, as Sayf was a Kūfan and relied almost exclusively on Kūfan informants. This pro-Iraqi bias is reflected, for example, in the much greater space he devoted to the conquest of Iraq, and especially the neighborhood of al-Kūfah, compared with that devoted to Syria. It is also manifest in the exaggerated role that he attributed to Khālid b. al-Walīd in the conquest of Syria (pp. 86-90, 94-99, 102-4, 111-17, 166-67, 170), for Khālid and the troops that he brought with him are characterized as Iraqis (pp. 88, 90, 116). In Sayf's account Khālid is improbably assigned the command and credited with the victory at the Battle of al-Yarmūk (pp. 89-90, 94-95, 97-98, 102, 104), though other sources attributed this victory to Abū 'Ubaydah b. al-Jarrāh.⁷ The length to which Sayf went to prove that Khālid, rather than Abū 'Ubaydah, had held command on that day, even to

7. E.g., Ibn Khayyāt, *Ta'rikh*, 118.

the extent of claiming that the message appointing Abū 'Ubaydah had arrived immediately *after* the battle (p. 95), probably indicates special pleading, even though his version is paralleled by traditions with a similar motif but referring to different battles (pp. 159–61). But Sayf has remolded these traditions for his own purposes and pushed the date of al-Yarmūk to 13 (634), two years earlier than that given in all other sources, precisely in order to accommodate his claim of Khālid's command, as it was most likely known to Sayf's hearers that the caliph 'Umar had dismissed Khālid on his accession, so that he could not have been in command as late as 15 (636). Because Khālid had initiated the conquest of Iraq, he is represented in Sayf's pro-Iraqi traditions as the standard bearer of that province, though there really could as yet have been no question of the Muslim troops' identifying themselves with either Syria or Iraq, a later development.

In general, the tribal traditions transmitted by Sayf are most unconvincing in detail. Even Fred Donner, who reacts against the tendency to denigrate Sayf,⁸ nevertheless denounces his "Battle of Buwayb" (pp. 196–213) as a complete fabrication.⁹ In another instance that falls outside this volume, that of the alleged conquest of Khurāsān in 18 (639), the entire narrative is a palpable fabrication of tribal tradition and is of interest only as evidence that that tradition was current in Sayf's time, not as a real source for the events that it purports to cover.¹⁰ Furthermore, the geographical extent of the earliest conquests has also been improbably exaggerated, indicating deep penetration of the Iraqi plain even before the defeat of the main Persian armies.¹¹

Although Sayf clearly drew on tribal traditions and possibly other, more reputable sources for much of his narrative, he nevertheless appears also to have made a considerable personal contribution to

8. Donner, *Conquests*, 143–44, 303 n. 36, 306 n. 94, 317 n. 212, 319 n. 247, 333 n. 118, and esp. 338 n. 179.

9. Donner, *Conquests*, 198–200.

10. Ṭabarī, I, 2680–93; Gibb, *Arab Conquests*, 15, dismisses Sayf's report as "Arab legend" in a single sentence.

11. For example, the assertion that Khālid b. al-Walid advanced toward Kaskar on the Tigris already in his first raid. See pp. 15–20, below. However, as both Abū Mikhnaḥ (p. 5, below) and Ibn Khayyāt, *Ta'rikh*, 100–2, contain similar reports drawn from independent sources, they cannot have been created by Sayf, however much he may have embroidered on the battle scenes; rather, they belong to the tribal tradition.

the traditions that he transmitted. It would be most useful to assess what this contribution is, because then we could isolate some of the elements that have been added to the tradition later. But such an assessment has never been made, because the partisan tendencies of Sayf, though they must have existed, have never been adduced, even though his corpus in al-Ṭabarī provides plenty of suggestive material.

As Sayf lived under the early 'Abbāsids, it might logically be thought that his work shows the same pro-'Abbāsīd and therefore anti-Umayyad tendencies that are generally alleged for historians of the 'Abbāsīd period. It might further be thought than any pro-Umayyad snippets in his reports might go back to earlier sources that he borrowed from. Actually, neither is the case. Despite certain concessions to the 'Abbāsīd dynasty,¹² the work of Sayf b. 'Umar is propelled mainly by other concerns entirely: opposition to the extreme claims of the 'Alids and justification of all the Companions of the Prophet.

Although he hailed from al-Kūfah, the crucible of early Shī'ism, Sayf belonged to a completely anti-Shī'ī undercurrent, representing the Kūfan faction that had earlier opposed the rebellions of al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī and Zayd b. 'Alī.¹³ This undercurrent was generally represented by Arabs from the Muḍar tribal group, which had been favored by the Umayyads. Sayf was an Usayyidī and therefore a member of the main branch of the Tamīm, which, along with the rest of the Muḍar, had stood by the Umayyads in Khurāsān.¹⁴ With the advent of the 'Abbāsids, an event that Sayf probably witnessed, a party had come to power that ultimately derived its legitimacy from 'Alid claims, even though the 'Alid party itself rejected the 'Abbāsīd parvenus. With the fall of the Umayyads, the public cursing of 'Alī was stopped, and instead the 'Alids were free to curse the opponents of 'Alī, many of whom had been Companions of the Prophet. But

12. E.g., when al-'Abbās alone of all the Medinan Muslims is reported to have piously refused to receive delegations from the *riddah* tribesmen; Ṭabarī, I, 1873.

13. This is indicated by his quotation from sources involved in the killing of al-Ḥusayn (pp. 204, 206, 216, 222). Sayf's partisanship also suggests that the factions of early Islam persisted longer in the original kin groups than has generally been recognized.

14. On Muḍar's loyalty to the Umayyads in Khurāsān, see Blankinship, "Tribal Factor," 596-600.

'Alid legitimist claims had been disappointed by the 'Abbāsids' usurpation of what the 'Alids considered their rightful place, and 'Alid supporters could, of course, not publicly criticize the new dynasty. Therefore, in order to vent their frustrations, the partisans of 'Ali laid blame in ever more strident tones on those Companions of the Prophet who had deprived 'Ali of the succession in the first place: Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmān, the Umayyads, and the Quraysh in general.

It was in this heated atmosphere that Sayf b. 'Umar rushed to the defense of those Companions attacked by the 'Alids and produced a narrative of the conquests and first civil war meant to justify them. Placing new material in the framework of the received historical tradition of his time, he reshaped the story of the early caliphate to prove the blamelessness of all the Prophet's Companions. In seeking to counteract the early Companions' later mistakes, he portrayed the harmoniousness of their earlier relations and showed how they had fought hard against the non-Muslims in the conquests. At the same time he blackened the non-Arab opponents of Islam to show the Muslims' superiority and to emphasize their unity against the non-Muslims. Sayf thus represented the early conquests in a picture of harmonious cooperation among all the Arab tribes against the Persians and the Romans, quite unlike the picture that was being promoted in circles sympathetic to Shī'ism. Those tribal traditions emphasizing the struggle against the non-Muslim Persians clearly suited his purpose. At the same time it must be remembered that Sayf's anti-Shī'ī tendency did not extend to casting aspersions on the careers of 'Alī or his supporters. Rather, Sayf also sought to justify 'Alī and to exculpate him from all blame.

The egregious tendentiousness of Sayf's corpus comes out most plainly in other volumes of al-Ṭabarī, in such episodes as *Saqifat Banī Sā'idah* (Ṭabarī, I, 1844–50), the burial of 'Uthmān (3049–50), and the tale of 'Abdallāh b. Saba' (2858–59, 2922, 2928, 2942–44, 2954, 3027, 3163–65, 3180). In each of these instances, other versions that do not confirm Sayf's own are available for comparison and reveal the impudence of his "daring constructions."¹⁵ The material in this volume, on the other hand, is often unparalleled elsewhere and thus more difficult to criticize. Nevertheless, Sayf's par-

15. For this phrase, see Petersen, *'Alī and Mu'āwiya*, pp. 81–82.

tianship can be recognized here as well when his reports are carefully scrutinized.

Sayf's tendencies are most clearly revealed in this volume in his reports glorifying the Companions of the Prophet. But which Companions receive the most such attention? The first beneficiaries of his encomia are the Quraysh, precisely the group that was being most denounced by the 'Alids. To counteract such talk, Sayf bestowed military commands and roles on Qurashis that are not attested elsewhere and appear unlikely in view of the tendency for celebrated early Companions to remain at Medina, possibly as a result of a deliberate policy, while the conquests were carried on by a select set of military leaders, many of whom had embraced Islam only in the last few years of the Prophet's life and some of whom either were not Qurashis or were associated with the marginal Qurashi clan of Fihri. Much of this material seems to be a direct addition to the tradition by Sayf himself in the interests of defending the Qurashi Companions, especially early ones, against 'Alid accusations. This is a likely supposition because many of the military roles mentioned for such Qurashis are mentioned nowhere else but in Sayf's reports.¹⁶ Sayf also appended longer military careers to the lives of certain non-Qurashi Companions.¹⁷

The same is also true of certain alleged participants in the Battles of the Camel and Şiffin in 36–37 (656–58). Some of them were said to have been Companions; others were not, but Sayf endowed them with military roles in the conquests not attested elsewhere. He did so particularly for those who fought against 'Alī, which confirms his anti-'Alid and pro-Umayyad tendency. He never attacked pro-'Alid Companions directly, however, for his paramount concern, as with later Sunnis, was the justification of *all* the Companions, or, if that

16. In this volume he exaggerated the role of Dirār b. al-Khaṭṭāb al-Fihri, to whom only Sayf attributed a role on the Iraqi front (pp. 28, 30, 43, 117); his purpose was to endow Iraq with more Companions of the Prophet. Other Qurashis whose roles were exaggerated include 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Khālid b. al-Walid (p. 90), Ḥabīb b. Maslamah al-Fihri (p. 91), Şafwān b. Umayyah al-Jumāhī (p. 91), Abū Sufyān b. Ḥarb al-Umawī (pp. 93–94, 100), and Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī, actually a Qurashī *mawlā* (p. 92). The motif of the justification of those Qurashis who became Muslims only at the conquest of Mecca in 8 (630) is particularly evident in the report featuring 'Ikrimah b. Abī Jahl and his fictitious son, on pp. 99–100.

17. Those in this volume include al-Zibriqān b. Badr al-Tamīmī (pp. 53, 60), 'Utbah b. Rabī'ah al-Bahrānī (p. 93), and Ghālib b. 'Abdallāh al-Laythī (pp. 201, 209).

proved impossible, at least the greatest number possible. As the 'Alid party had already provided justification for the supporters of 'Alī,¹⁸ Sayf probably felt that it was the supporters of the Umayyads and the Zubayrids whose reputations were most in need of defense.¹⁹

Beside exaggerating the roles of certain Companions in the early conquests, Sayf also embellished his work with the exploits of other, imaginary Companions and with heroes whom he invented, especially to represent his own tribal group. The most outstanding of these fabrications is al-Qa'qā' b. 'Amr, a hero and alleged Companion of the Prophet, who is, not surprisingly, said to be a member of Sayf's own subtribe, the Usayyid (in this volume, pp. 8, 24, 36, 40, 42–43, 45, 48, 60–63, 65, 90, 95, 166, 168.). His being an Usayyidi suggests that his fabrication is owing to Sayf himself and not to any of Sayf's alleged sources, as none of the latter is identified as an Usayyidi. In addition, many other persons supposedly belonging to the Tamīm tribal group appear to be fabrications, some of them having stereotypical names that suggest almost playful invention, like "Wrap, the son of Skirt," "Spring Herbage, the son of Rain, the son of Snow," and "Sea, the son of the Euphrates."²⁰ The reader will find dozens of persons who are named only in Sayf's traditions recorded in this volume.

Not all the invented personages are Muslim Arabs, however, for in order to glorify further the exploits of the Arab conquerors, Sayf attributed exalted lineages to many of the opponents whom they conquered. Thus, one finds that most of the Persians mentioned are

18. However, Sayf nonetheless endowed certain of 'Alī's partisans with military roles in the early conquests that are not attested elsewhere. Those mentioned in this volume include Mālik al-Ash'ar b. al-Hārith al-Nakha'i (pp. 100, 168), Sa'd b. 'Amr b. Harām al-Khazraji (p. 109), al-Hārith b. Hassān al-Dhuhli (p. 117), Ma'bad b. Ak-tam al-Khuzā'i (p. 117), 'Urwah b. Zayd al-Khayl al-Ṭā'i (p. 209), and possibly 'Abdallāh b. Yazīd al-Awsī (pp. 190, 193–94).

19. Among those who fought against 'Alī's party and who were attributed military roles in the early conquests in Sayf's reports alone, this volume includes Rabi'ah b. 'Isl al-Yarbū'i (p. 48), Dhū al-Kalā' al-Himyari (pp. 77, 81, 92, 165, 168, 172), Abū al-A'war b. Sufyān al-Sulamī (pp. 91, 164, 168, 170, 172), Mu'āwiyah b. Hudayj al-Sukūnī (p. 92), Hawshab b. Yazīd al-Hamdānī (p. 92), Masrūq b. Harmalah al-'Akki (pp. 93, 165, 168), Qabāth b. Ashyam al-Laythī (pp. 93–94), Bishr b. 'Ismah al-Muzani (p. 164), 'Alqamah b. Ḥakīm al-Kinānī (pp. 165, 168), 'Amr b. Shimr (p. 168), and Sha-bath b. Rib'i al-Riyāhi (p. 203).

20. On Sayf's fabricated personages in general, see al-'Askari, *Khamsūn wa-mī'ah shaḥābi*, which is entirely devoted to twenty-three Tamīmīs whom Sayf is said to have fabricated; most of them are mentioned in this volume.

linked with the Sāsānian royal house by improbable genealogies (e.g., pp. 120, 182). Shahrbarāz, Khusrāw II's general whose usurpation of the throne had been suppressed shortly before the conquest is said to have been a member of the royal family (p. 117). Scions of other defunct families also appear, like the Ghassānids of Buṣrā (pp. 58–59, 115); the Lakhmids of al-Ḥirah, who had disappeared more than thirty years before (p. 58; cf. p. 216; see also Ṭabarī, I, 1960–61, 2226); and even the family of Bahrām Chūbīn, the Persian usurper who had been decisively suppressed almost forty-five years earlier than the conquest (p. 53)!

Beside having fabricated many of the personages who appear in his transmissions, it also appears that Sayf fabricated the names of many, perhaps most, of his alleged authorities. In fact, medieval Muslims already had noticed that most of his authorities were *majhūlūn*, or unknowns, the quality of whose transmissions could not be verified because no information about them existed.²¹ In view of the enormous corpus of medieval Muslim biographical literature, it is very strange that nothing can be discovered about most of Sayf's immediate sources, especially as they were apparently from al-Kūfah, a major center for the recording of the Islamic tradition. In the case of other transmitters of Sayf's generation, it occasionally happens that an unknown authority will appear, but, in the case of Sayf, the majority appear to be unknown. Given the shared traits found in many of Sayf's traditions that we can attribute with some confidence to Sayf himself, it would appear that many of his alleged "authorities" are simply his own inventions.

Frequently it seems that these invented "authorities" served as intermediate links between Sayf and earlier genuine traditionists

21. *Majhūlūn* authorities contained in this volume and claimed by Sayf to have transmitted directly to him include 'Amr b. Muḥammad, al-Muḥallab b. 'Uqbah al-Asadī, 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Siyāh al-Aḥmarī, Ṭalḥah b. al-A'lam al-Ḥanafī, 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭā' al-Bakkā'ī, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Sawād b. Nuwayrah, Ziyād b. Sarjis al-Aḥmarī, Sufyān al-Aḥmarī, Baḥr b. al-Furāt al-'Ijlī, al-Ghuṣn b. al-Qāsim al-Kinānī, Abū Sufyān Ṭalḥah b. 'Abd al-Rahmān, Mubashshir b. Fuḍayl, Sahl b. Yūsuf, Abū 'Uthmān Yazīd b. Asīd al-Ghassānī, al-Mustanir b. Yazīd al-Nakha'ī, al-Naḍr b. al-Sari al-Dabbī, and Abū al-Khaṭṭāb Hamzah b. 'Alī b. al-Muḥaffiz. Of these, only Ṭalḥah b. al-A'lam and Hamzah are named elsewhere than in Sayf's *isnāds*. On pp. 106–7 we are presented with the incredible information that the al-Muḥallab and 'Abd al-Rahmān, both included in this list, actually participated in the early conquests with Khālid. That would make them about 150 years old when they were transmitting to Sayf!

whose authority Sayf wished to use to bolster his own inventions. Had Sayf himself alleged to have transmitted from, say, the famous al-Sha'bi, the fraud would have been quickly discovered, for Sayf was probably a notorious and controversial celebrity in his own time. Had he claimed to have transmitted from one of al-Sha'bi's known pupils, he would also have been denounced had he deviated from that pupil's tradition. But, when he alleged an unknown pupil of al-Sha'bi as his intermediary, no one could offer a sure proof against his forgery based on the chain of transmission alone, especially when the generation of Sayf had passed from the scene.

For example, in this volume, Sayf cited 'Amr b. Muḥammad as transmitting from al-Sha'bi (pp. 1, 7, 13, 17, 19–20, 25, 38–39, 47, 83, 176), Sufyān al-Aḥmarī as transmitting from Māhān (pp. 39, 41, 45, 48), Sahl b. Yūsuf as transmitting from al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad (pp. 79, 81, 173, 175), and Mubashshir b. Fuḍayl as transmitting from Sālim b. 'Abdallāh (pp. 81, 175). From this list we can see that Sayf normally used his invented "authority" only a few times as a link to a proven traditionist from an earlier generation; more often, he cited these same immediate "authorities" of his by themselves, without carrying the chain of transmission back farther. But from his few citations of reliable earlier traditionists as sources for his own "authorities" he gained tremendously in credibility, for he made it appear that they were the students of earlier great traditionists. As a result, when he subsequently cited 'Amr, without carrying the chain of authority back to al-Sha'bi, he gave the impression that the transmission must have come from al-Sha'bi or at least must have been something the latter would have approved, while at the same time he made himself safe from the accusation that he had put something into al-Sha'bi's mouth.

Beside fabricating intermediaries, it appears that Sayf sometimes extended a chain of transmitters back an additional generation by adding the nameless father of the earliest transmitter to the beginning of the chain (e.g., p. 37). These persons are frequently unknown in any source, even though Sayf's named authority is known, which suggests that Sayf gratuitously introduced the authority's parent in order to strengthen his documentation.

Sayf often quoted from well-attested authorities also and sometimes offered chains of transmitters whose existence in every generation can be documented from *rijāl* books or other sources. But he

usually cited these "real" authorities only for brief passages, whereas the bulk of his reports he attributed to what Donner called the "MTZMAS group": Muḥammad, Ṭalḥah, Ziyād, al-Muhallab, 'Amr, and Sa'īd b. al-Marzubān,²² only the last of whom is a well-attested transmitter; in fact, he does not even properly belong in the group, as he is infrequently quoted, compared to the others.²³ It thus appears that Sayf cited reliable authorities to give the impression that he was using a wide variety of informants, while he created his own version of events using the names of mostly imaginary informants whom he had invented or whose material, even if it actually came from such persons, he reworked freely. As he apparently did not even quote his reliable informants accurately, he was roundly condemned in the Sunnī tradition for having foisted falsehoods on trustworthy transmitters.

Although up to this point we have portrayed Sayf's reports as totally devoid of historical relevance for the period they claim to cover, the picture may not be entirely bleak, for Sayf of necessity transmitted much authentic material in which he embedded his fabrications, which otherwise would not have carried conviction with his audience. However, that material is difficult to disentangle and generally may be entertained as historical evidence only when corroborated by another source.

A couple of examples may be given, both for authentic material in Sayf and for the difficulty of distilling it from the invented. First, Alois Musil was convinced that Sayf's transmissions were reliable because of their geographical plausibility.²⁴ Based on Musil's research, one will have to admit at least the real existence of most of the places mentioned by Sayf. However, this proves not that the alleged association of these places with particular historical events is also accurate, but only that he based his reports in many cases on accurate geography.

A second testimony in favor of Sayf's work's containing some authentic material is the frequency with which he cited names of in-

22. Donner, *Conquests*, pp. 139, 317 n. 212, 336 n. 158.

23. It must be admitted that Ṭalḥah b. al-A'lam is cited once in Ṭabari, I, 3139, in an *isnād* through others than Sayf; however, this single instance hardly constitutes adequate documentation for the enormous quantity of Sayf's transmissions from him, many of which Sayf may have fathered onto his alleged source.

24. Musil, *Arabia Deserta*, 566-73; Musil, *Middle Euphrates*, 306-14.

dividuals who are attested independently in other early Muslim historical or literary works. Such personages are much less likely to be fabrications than those found only in Sayf's reports. Their presence suggests that it may be possible to separate some authentic information from Sayf's fabrications. An example is the list of participants in the Battle of al-Yarmūk (pp. 90–94). Although not all those named may actually have fought at that battle, most seem indeed to be attested elsewhere as at least having taken part in some phase of the conquest of Syria. The list, which may actually predate Sayf, can therefore be cited as corroborative evidence, except where those named can otherwise be shown not to belong there, as in the case of the ubiquitous al-Qa'qā' b. 'Amr, whom Sayf himself had presumably inserted.

Generally Sayf's transmissions compare unfavorably with those of more authentic transmitters of tradition like Ibn Ishāq, Ibn al-Kalbī, and Abū Mikhnaf. This is not to deny that their transmissions also involve many problems, but they are nonetheless superior to those of Sayf. Their reports nearly always are very terse, representing almost all that remains of the older tradition, whereas Sayf's work represents huge, tendentious elaborations in support of his own political stance. For example, whereas Ibn Ishāq's account of al-Yarmūk (Ṭabarī, I, 2347–49) is brief,²⁵ Sayf's report is much longer (pp. 83–104).

The matter can be taken a step farther if we consider the transmissions of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (d. 314/926), another Kūfan, who lived a century later than Sayf. Ibn A'tham dropped all pretense of citing sources, preferring to combine whatever sources he used with his own creative writing in one unified and seamless version. Although, like Sayf, he may have preserved some authentic material, it is buried in his wildly tendentious reshaping of the story. His account of al-Yarmūk is more than fifty pages long.²⁶ In Ibn A'tham's work Muslim defeats like the Battle of the Bridge, described poignantly by Sayf (pp. 188–93), have been absurdly turned into Muslim victories.²⁷ The Persian commander, Jābān, improbably claimed by Sayf to have been captured and then to have escaped by a ruse (pp.

25. Or see Ibn al-Kalbī's even briefer version, cited in Ibn Khayyāt, *Ta'rikh*, 118.

26. Kūfī, *Futūh*, I, 218–71.

27. Kūfī, *Futūh*, I, 168–74.

180–81), not only remained captive in Ibn A'tham's version but became a Muslim as well.²⁸ Thus the fanciful Kūfan tradition of the conquests grew, perhaps encouraged by the need for the constantly repressed and downtrodden city of al-Kūfah to recover a modicum of military self-esteem through the elaboration of a glorious, if mythical, past.

Like the work of Ibn A'tham, the transmissions of al-Ṭabarī from Sayf contained in this volume belong more to the realm of historical romance than to that of history. But, unlike early tribal or national epics, which arose entirely in an oral milieu and were notoriously devoid of interested messages, the work of Sayf arose in the highly articulated political environment of the 'Alids' controversy with their opponents and is thus filled with ideological content and tendentiousness. Its nearest parallel outside Muslim history is perhaps to be sought in the Late Roman *Historia Augusta* (c. 395 C.E.), itself a work by a single polemicist who was on the losing side in an ideological struggle. Like Sayf, that anonymous Latin writer strove to present personages whom he identified as being of his own party in earlier times in a favorable light by retrojecting his own fabrications about them into the past. Like Sayf's work, the *Historia Augusta* contains some authentic matter that it may be possible to disengage from the mass of fabrications and alterations.²⁹

This assessment of Sayf in no way undermines the authority of other early Muslim writers whose works may have an entirely different character, just as the Late Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus is in no way affected by the fraud of the *Historia Augusta*. On the contrary, it is greatly to the credit of the medieval Sunnī Muslims who assessed the quality of traditions in the *riḡāl* books that they unanimously rejected Sayf's authority in the most absolute way possible. They did so despite the fact that his traditions could have been used to back their emerging Sunnī consensus on early Islamic history. This suggests that their condemnation of Sayf's traditions was motivated by a concern for the truth, rather than by a wish to gain advantage in the partisan arena of the time. They realized that his transmissions were exaggerated and fraudu-

28. Kūfi, *Futūḥ*, I, 166.

29. On the *Historia Augusta*, see Syme, *Ammianus*; Syme, *Emperors*; Syme, *Historia Augusta*; and Syme, *Historia Augusta Papers*.

lent, and they said so. In fact, the condemnation of Sayf by the medieval Muslim '*ulamā*' ought to serve as a reminder to modern scholars that ancient and medieval texts were not always dictated by the prevailing political or religious climate and that the search for truth had its place in earlier times as well as in our own.

Finally, it should be remembered that Sayf's work remains important, even though his traditions have been shown to be largely unhistorical. For, although they may cast only a limited amount of light on the early Islamic conquests, they constitute one of the most important sources of the early 'Abbāsid period for the development of Sunnī attitudes toward early Muslim history, as well as for the emergence of polemic between Sunnī and Shī'ī. In particular, they enlighten us on the position of the minority anti-'Alid party in al-Kūfah and provide details of the party's attitude toward many individual historical personages.

There remains the question why the generally sober al-Ṭabarī adopted Sayf's versions wholesale in his history, probably to the detriment of other versions that were still available in his time but that may have perished partly because of his ignoring them in favor of Sayf. Although a final answer cannot be given here, it seems likely that Sayf's transmissions fulfilled two important desiderata in al-Ṭabarī's mind. First, his versions agreed with al-Ṭabarī's ideological position for he, too, was a *jamā'ī* Sunnī who preferred to minimize the strife among the early Muslims. Al-Ṭabarī thus handed on Sayf's transmissions, even though he can hardly have been unaware of the latter's poor reputation, which had already developed before his time. Perhaps he felt that he did not have to be as meticulous about historical transmissions as he might have been about normative *ḥadīths*. In a couple of instances al-Ṭabarī showed an awareness of Sayf's weakness, once when he denied Sayf's story of Khālid b. al-Walid's conquest of al-Baṣrah (pp. 14–15) and once again when he changed Sayf's dating of the alleged Tamīmī conquest of Khurāsān (Ṭabarī, I, 268o).

But in describing the conquests generally al-Ṭabarī scarcely deviated from Sayf's reports. This brings us to the second attraction that Sayf may have had for al-Ṭabarī: detail. Sayf's transmissions are almost always far more verbose than parallel reports of more sober traditionists. This characteristic probably not only made them preferable to al-Ṭabarī but may have seemed a guarantee of their accu-

racy. Living in medieval times, al-Ṭabarī did not, in the majority of instances, have available to him the modern critical tools that would have enabled him to discover Sayf's tendentiousness. And, after all, Sayf's reports have continued to receive the approbation of a minority of scholars even up to the present.³⁰

As for the translation itself, I have tried to be as literal as possible while keeping to readable English. Owing to the elliptical nature of the Arabic, I have frequently had to add words where pronouns were meant to be understood. In many other instances I have had to repeat a noun or name in order to make the reference clear. In all other instances in which I have added something to the text to make it more understandable, I have put the addition in brackets []. Words enclosed in ordinary parentheses () are part of the original text, except for Common Era dates, which are also in parentheses. Furthermore, I have striven to make the footnotes as comprehensive as possible, identifying each proper name at its first occurrence. To identify a name, the reader should find its first occurrence in the index; the relevant footnote should lie on the first page in the text on which that name appears.

One matter of word choice requires a bit of explanation. In this volume I have chosen to refer to the East Romans and their empire as Roman, rather than Byzantine. I have done so, despite the prevalence of the contrary practice for this period, for three reasons. First, it seems to be that "Roman" is more consonant with the prevailing trend of allowing peoples to be known by their own self-designation. Certainly the East Romans would have resented any implication that they were not Romans and would have viewed the term "Byzantine" as pejorative, as indeed it is. Second, although the division of the history of the Roman Empire into "Roman" and "Byzantine" phases may be convenient for scholars who wish to label their narrow specializations accordingly, it actually represents a western European perspective, in which it is considered that, after Rome "fell" in 476 C.E., all that went on in the East was purely secondary and very remote. It seems better to stress the continuity of Rome in the East. Finally, even if the term "Byzantine" were to be applied to that phase of the East Roman Empire when it had lost most of its non-Greek territories and ceased to be as multinational as before, say af-

30. Crone, *Slaves*, 9, 206 n. 51.

ter 717 C.E., the term would still not be appropriate to that empire in the early seventh century C.E., the period covered in this book. At that time the Romans still held, however tenuously, vast areas of Syrian, Egyptian, Punic, Berber, Armenian, and Latin population, and the extent of their rule differed little from what it had been in the mid-fifth century C.E., a period for which the designation "Roman" is generally accepted.

I wish to extend my thanks to the Tabari Translation Project for the opportunity to translate, annotate, and publish this work. I also give my thanks to my wife for her patience and support while I was working on this volume.

Khalid Yahya Blankinship

The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the
Conquest of Syria and Palestine
Volume XII
Translated by Yohanan Friedmann

The present volume of the History of al-Ṭabarī deals with the years 14 and 15 of the Islamic era, which correspond to A.D. 635-637. The nascent Islamic state had just emerged victorious from the crisis that followed the Prophet's death in 632 and had suppressed what was known as the *riddah* ("apostasy") rebellion in the Arabian peninsula. Under the leadership of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph, or successor to the Prophet Muḥammad, the Muslims embarked on the conquests that would soon transform the whole of the Middle East and North Africa into an Arab empire. Most of the present volume describes the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, which took place on the border between the fertile Iraqi lowlands (*al-sawād*) and the Arabian desert and resulted in the decisive defeat of the Persian army. The Muslim victory at al-Qādisiyyah heralded the downfall of the Sasanian dynasty, which had ruled Persia and Mesopotamia since A.D. the third century; it also paved the way for the conquest of Iraq and facilitated Islamic expansion into Persia and beyond.

The volume also deals with the conquest of Syria and Palestine and the expulsion of the Byzantines from those regions. Particular attention is devoted to the traditions related to the conquest of Jerusalem at the hands of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the first Muslim prayer on the Temple Mount, and its transformation into an Islamic sanctuary.

The volume contains colorful descriptions of the various battles, expatiations on the bravery of the Muslim warriors, and portrayals of the futile negotiations between the parties before the beginning of hostilities. It thus provides the reader with a fascinating insight into the later Muslim traditions related to these crucial events of early Islamic history.

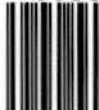
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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XII

***The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the
Conquest of Syria and Palestine***

A.D. 635–637/A.H. 14–15



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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XII

**The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the
Conquest of Syria and Palestine**

translated and annotated
by

Yohanan Friedmann

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839 923), here rendered as *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn

Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq'' means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *sirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



BGA	<i>Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum</i>
CHI	<i>The Cambridge History of Iran</i>
El ¹	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , first edition
El ²	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , second edition
GAL	C. Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur</i> . Leiden, 1937-49.
GAS	F. Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i> . Leiden, 1967-.
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
REI	<i>Revue des Études Islamiques</i>
RSO	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i>
SI	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
WI	<i>Die Welt des Islams</i>
WKAS	M. Ullmann et al., <i>Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache</i> . Wiesbaden 1957-.

Translator's Foreword*

I

Most of the present volume, which describes a part of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb's reign, deals with the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, in which the Muslims decisively defeated the Persians. This victory heralded the downfall of the Sasanian dynasty, paved the way for the conquest of Iraq, and facilitated Islamic expansion into Persia and beyond. Al-Qādisiyyah is located to the southwest of the ancient city of al-Ḥīrah, on the border between the fertile Iraqi lowlands (*al-sawād*) and the Arabian desert. Ṭabarī's text (which records the accounts of Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī, and predominantly that of Sayf b. 'Umar),¹ confronts the reader with manifold historical problems. Even such a basic question as the date of the battle is not easily solved: Ṭabarī's sources give the date as 14, 15, or 16/635–37.² Many of the places through which the troops moved on their way to the battlefield and in which the skirmishes occurred cannot be identified with sufficient precision, and it is therefore impossible to elucidate many tactical aspects of the battle.³ The size of the armies involved in the fighting presents another baffling problem: The data for the Sasanian army vary between 30,000 and 210,000; in the early sources, the Muslims are said to have numbered between 6,000 and 12,000, but

*Unless otherwise specified, all references in the introduction are to Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I.

1. But not of 'Awānah b. al-Ḥakam, as suggested by L. Veccia Vaglieri in her article "al-Kādisiyya" in *EP*. For recent evaluations of Sayf as a historian, see A. Duri, *Historical Writing*, index; and Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Sayf Ibn 'Umar."

2. See pp. 2377, 2349; cf. *EP*, "al-Kādisiyya," 386a–b.

3. Cf. Donner, *Conquests*, 204.

a later source, al-Mas'ūdi, speaks of 38,000 or 88,000 Muslim warriors.⁴ As far as the historicity of Ṭabari's description is concerned, the material presently available is unlikely to yield results beyond those attained by Veccia Vaglieri, Donner, Noth,⁵ and other scholars. It therefore seems advisable to refer the reader to their work and to use this introduction in order to highlight other aspects of Ṭabari's fascinating text.

II

It seems that a considerable segment of the material included in this volume was suitable to be used by storytellers (*quṣṣās*) in order to capture the attention of their listeners.⁶ This is especially the case with regard to the parables related by the Persian general Rustam in order to convince the Muslims to retreat;⁷ King Yazdagird's parable of the eagle and the birds;⁸ the description of the magicians' contest at the court;⁹ the numerous instances in which Muslims outwitted Persians in debate, deed, or combat; and the story of the bull who, while being hidden in the thicket by his owner, suddenly speaks out in order to disclose his location and enable the Muslims to lead him away, presumably to his death.¹⁰ Descriptions of extreme personal bravery are of a different character but equally captivating, and it is noteworthy that some commanders are made to say in their exhor-

4. These rather disparate numbers constitute two versions given in the various editions of Mas'ūdi's *Murūj*. The figure 38,000 appears in the first edition (Paris, 1861–67, IV, 208), as well as in the edition of C. Pellat (Beirut, 1970, III, 55). The higher figure appears in the edition published in Beirut in 1965, II, 312. The two versions are graphically fairly similar in the Arabic script, which is probably the reason for the discrepancy. See also Donner, *Conquests*, 203–5; *EP*, s.v. "al-Kādisiyya," 386a. G. H. A. Juynboll has recently suggested that one should divide all these numbers by a coefficient of 100 in order to arrive at a plausible description of events. See Juynboll, *Conquests*, xiii–xvi.

5. Noth, *Studien*, should be consulted particularly with regard to the historical reliability of the material, as well as with regard to the various recurrent themes in Ṭabari's account. Noth has used numerous passages included in the present volume for his analyses. See, for instance, *Studien*, 72–73, with regard to pp. 2235 and 2251 of Ṭabari's text.

6. See *EP*, s.v. "Kāṣṣ" (Ch. Pellat). See also F. Rosenthal's pertinent observation about the "colorful novelistic presentation of the events" by such traditionists as Sayf b. 'Umar in *Muslim Historiography*, 166; and Duri, *Historical Writing*, 144–45.

7. See pp. 2281–83, 2352.

8. See p. 2248.

9. See pp. 2252–53.

10. See p. 2234.

tations to the troops that the exploits performed by the Muslims in the impending battle will be related in festivals forever and ever.¹¹ We may mention the harrowing story of a Muslim who, though disemboweled, continued to fight until his death;¹² the poem in which a warrior who lost his leg enjoins himself to endure and not let the lost leg divert his attention from the battle;¹³ and the poem in which the hero pledges to continue using his hand in combat, though three of its fingers have just been cut off.¹⁴ The heroism and military prowess of certain Muslims seem all the more impressive when their indomitable deeds are related and extolled by their captured enemies.¹⁵

Considerable space is devoted by Ṭabarī to the encounters between the Persian leaders and several Muslim delegations and individuals who were either invited to the Persian court to negotiate a solution to the conflict or sent by 'Umar in order to invite the king to embrace Islam. In these discussions, said to have been held at the royal court or at Rustam's military headquarters, there are several recurrent themes. The Persians treat the Muslims with contempt, speak derisively about their weapons, expatiate on their poverty and primitive way of life, and assert that they do not have the military might required to take on such an empire as that of the Persians.¹⁶ Anachronistic echoes of Shu'ūbī arguments can clearly be discerned in the speeches said to have been addressed to the successive Muslim delegations. The Persians also threaten the Muslims with death and destruction if they seek to accomplish their goals by military means.¹⁷ At the same time, Yazdagird and Rustam make repeated attempts to dissuade the Muslims from embarking on such a course by promises of material gain if they will desist from their warlike intentions.¹⁸ Their arguments are supported by an ostentatious display of luxury and abundance at the court.¹⁹

The most noticeable feature of the Muslim response to this arro-

11. See p. 2294, above; cf. p. 2293, above.

12. See p. 2310.

13. See pp. 2328–29.

14. See p. 2410.

15. See pp. 2263–64.

16. See pp. 2236, 2275, 2279, 2280, 2352.

17. See p. 2337.

18. See pp. 2240, 2267, 2276, 2281.

19. See pp. 2270, 2274.

gant display of opulence is studied contempt. Ignoring orders to dismount before entering into Rustam's presence, the Muslims contemptuously ride their horses on the luxurious carpets of the Persians. On other occasions they plunge their spears into the carpets and cushions, tearing them to shreds. Their rugged and shabby appearance is brought into sharp relief when contrasted with the luxury and finery of their rivals.²⁰

Responding to speeches delivered by the Persians, the Muslims freely admit that the conditions in which they lived in the pre-Islamic period (*al-Jāhiliyyah*) were primitive, claiming, however, that this has lost all significance because these conditions had undergone a substantial transformation for the better with the coming of Islam.²¹ The Muslim spokesmen counter the threats of the Persians with the repeatedly expressed conviction that Muslims who die on the battlefield will be rewarded in Paradise and that those who survive will prevail over their enemies.²² The Persians are offered the three classical options: to embrace Islam, to pay the poll tax, or to be attacked and defeated.²³ None of the Persian suggestions of material support is acceptable; unlike the pre-Islamic Arabs, the Muslims do not fight for worldly possessions or in order to improve their standard of living. Their only objective is to spread the new faith of Islam.

Tabarī's account of the battle and of the events surrounding it contains several episodes of a symbolic nature. These are introduced at various stages in order to assure the listener or the reader that the outcome of the war will be favorable to the Muslims. In several cases these indications gain increased credibility by being associated with Persian dignitaries. It is King Yazdagird who perceives a disastrous omen in a few words used in his discussion with a Muslim delegation.²⁴ In another episode, Yazdagird places a load of soil on a Muslim's neck and drives him out of the capital city of al-Madā'in, together with his companions. The king's intention is to humiliate the Muslims, but Rustam's interpretation is different: He perceives

20. See pp. 2270-71, 2273.

21. See pp. 2241-42, 2268, 2283-84, 2352-53.

22. See pp. 2237, 2242.

23. See pp. 2240, 2242, 2272, 2273, 2284, but see Noth, *Studien*, 131ff.; and Crone, *Slaves*, 208-9 n. 68.

24. See p. 2239.

it as a symbol that the Muslims have taken hold of the keys to the Persian kingdom and "carried the country away."²⁵ Another event of symbolic nature occurs in the heat of battle. A westerly wind of gale force, which is traditionally described as having destroyed the rebellious community of 'Ād in the legendary past, topples the sunshade from Rustam's throne. The significance is clear: God is about to destroy the infidel kingdom of Persia, as he had destroyed the sinful community of 'Ād.²⁶ The Persian defeat is also indicated when Rustam dreams of an angel who seals the Persian weapons, surrenders them to 'Umar, or takes them up to heaven.²⁷ Furthermore, Ṭabarī uses the astrological knowledge attributed to Rustam in order to convey to the reader the feeling that the defeat of the Persians is being predicted by the stars and is therefore inescapable.²⁸ Rustam is made to play a double role; on the one hand, he is loyal to his king and does his best to save the empire by trying to persuade the Arabs to desist and return to their land. When these efforts fail, he leads his army into battle. On the other hand, he is keenly aware of the fact that his efforts will be of no avail and that the Persian empire is doomed.

III

A much smaller segment of the present volume deals with battles against the Byzantines and the conquest of Syria and Palestine.²⁹ As in the case of al-Qādisiyyah, the chronology of these events is largely uncertain.³⁰ Ṭabarī describes the battles of Marj al-Rūm;³¹ the conquest of the northern Syrian cities of Ḥimṣ (Emesa)³² and Qinnasrīn;³³ the conquest of Caesarea on the Palestinian coast;³⁴ and the battle of Ajnādayn.³⁵ Following these defeats of the Byzantines, Emperor Heraclius decided to leave Syria, asserting that his departure

25. See pp. 2242-44. Cf. Yusuf, "Qādisiyya," 15.

26. See p. 2236; and *EP*, s.v. "Ād" (F. Buhl).

27. See pp. 2266, 2286.

28. See pp. 2251, 2253, 2266.

29. Cf. Donner, *Conquests*, 148-51.

30. Cf. Donner, *Conquests*, 146.

31. See pp. 2389-90.

32. See pp. 2390-92.

33. See pp. 2393-94.

34. See pp. 2397-99.

35. See p. 2400.

was final: No Byzantine would return to Syria until the end of days, except in fear.³⁶ Parallel to the case of al-Qādisiyyah, Ṭabarī's text reflects a sharp perception of the historical significance of these events for the expansion and durability of Islam.³⁷

A chapter of special interest deals with the surrender of Jerusalem to 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.³⁸ The problem of 'Umar's visit to Jerusalem and of its historicity has been extensively discussed in two recent articles by H. Busse³⁹ and cannot be taken up here. Suffice it to say that in Ṭabarī's text 'Umar's conquest of the city is predicted by a Jew, yet one of the most important actions ascribed to 'Umar during his visit to the city reflects the disengagement of Islam from Judaism; The Muslims are enjoined to pray in the direction of Mecca alone, and the veneration of the Rock is prohibited. Fulfilling another prediction, 'Umar cleans the rubbish with which the Byzantines are said to have covered the Temple after its destruction. In this way he restores the Temple Mount to its purity and at the same time transforms it into a sanctuary of Islam.⁴⁰ The Islamization of Jerusalem has to be considered in conjunction with other developments in Islamic ritual that had similar significance. The change of the *qiblah* from Jerusalem to Mecca⁴¹ and the abolition of the obligatory fast of the tenth of Muḥarram, which had been established after the *hijrah* in imitation of the Jewish Day of Atonement,⁴² have to be considered in this context.

IV

Some of the most important material included in this volume deals with various matters of an economic and legal nature. The conquest of the fertile lowlands of Iraq (*al-sawād*) raised the question of the legal status of the land and its inhabitants. The issue was complicated by the fact that the conquest of the area was effected in two stages. The early campaigns of Khālīd b. al-Walīd — the so-called

36. See p. 2396.

37. For the great importance ascribed by the Arabs to the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, see p. 2364.

38. See pp. 2403-9.

39. "'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb"; "'Omar's Image."

40. For a critical interpretation of this episode, see Crone and Cook, *Hagarism*, 5-6.

41. See pp. 1279-81; *EP*, s.v. "Kibla" i. (A. J. Wensinck).

42. See p. 1281; *EP*, s.v. "'Āshūrā'" i. (A. J. Wensinck).

ayyām—are estimated to have taken place in the spring or summer of 12/633.⁴³ In the wake of his victories, Khālid b. al-Walīd concluded treaties with the people of al-Ḥīrah and several other localities. These treaties stipulated payment of the poll tax and, in one case, obliged the inhabitants to spy on behalf of the Muslims.⁴⁴ The later battles, among which al-Qādisiyyah takes pride of place, occurred sometime between 14 and 16/635–38. The legal question was whether there should be any difference in the status of the inhabitants who made peace treaties with Khālid b. al-Walīd and who had fulfilled their obligations accordingly and those whose lands were overrun in the second stage of the conquest and who did not have any treaties with the conquering Muslims. According to the historical tradition recorded by Ṭabarī, Sa'd b. Abi Waqqās, the commander of the Muslim forces in al-Qādisiyyah, implemented the treaties that Khālid b. al-Walīd had concluded earlier. With regard to the inhabitants of the *sawād* who did not have treaties, Sa'd asked 'Umar to make a ruling. Describing the behavior of the inhabitants during the fighting, he discerned several groups among them: those who stayed in their abodes, those who left and later claimed that they had been forcibly recruited into the Persian army, those who abandoned their land without giving any explanation for their move, and those who surrendered to the Muslims without a fight.⁴⁵ The underlying assumption of his discourse is that abandoning the land at the time of the fighting is *prima facie* a hostile act and that an explanation is necessary in order to induce the Muslims to disregard it or to view it in a different light.⁴⁶ Sa'd made it clear that it was, nevertheless, in the best interest of the Muslims to gain the goodwill of the entire population. 'Umar's reply made ostensible distinctions between the various groups, but its salient point was the grant to Sa'd of power to treat all inhabitants of the *sawād*, even those who had abandoned their land in order to assist the Persians, in the same way: to conclude a treaty that would allow them to keep their land and oblige them to pay the poll tax.⁴⁷ This development is best summarized in a tradition recorded by Ibn Sallām: "The people of

43. See Donner, *Conquests*, 178.

44. See pp. 2019–20, 2044–45, 2049–50; Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 244–45.

45. These groups are, of course, not mutually exclusive.

46. Cf. p. 2467.

47. See pp. 2368–71.

the *sawād* did not have a treaty. But when the poll tax was levied on them, [*ipso facto*] a treaty with them came into being" (*lam yakun li-ahl al-sawād 'ahd fa-lammā ukhidhat minhum al-jizyah šāra lahum 'ahd*).⁴⁸ 'Umar resisted the demands made by some prominent Muslims—Bilāl b. Rabāḥ, the *mu'adhdhin* of the Prophet, and al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām are mentioned among them—to divide the land conquered by force among the warriors. He preferred that the original inhabitants retain possession of the land, so that the taxes imposed upon them would serve as a perennial source of income for the Muslim community.⁴⁹ Only the property of the royal family and of its active supporters and some areas in public use (such as the properties of the Zoroastrian fire temples) became *fay'*, "solid booty," and were to be divided among the Muslims. It was, however, impractical to put this division into effect because the areas in question were scattered over the entire *sawād*. They were therefore administered collectively on behalf of those who were entitled to shares in them (*ahl al-fay'*).⁵⁰

These were, in broad terms, the economic and legal arrangements that are said to have been concluded with the original population of the conquered Iraqi lowlands.⁵¹ Ṭabarī's historical tradition speaks also about the economic arrangements made within the Muslim community. These are subsumed under the heading of the pay system (*'aṭā'*) and the military register (*dīwān*).⁵² Seniority in Islam was in most instances the criterion according to which the amount of pay was determined. Those who embraced Islam early enough to participate in the battle of Badr in 2/624 received five thousand dirhams. Those who joined the Prophet between Badr and al-Ḥudaybiyyah (6/628) received four thousand each. With each successive stage of conversion the amount decreased: The lowest payment was determined for those who joined Islam and the Muslim army at various times after the battles of Yarmūk and al-Qādisiyyah. Muslims who acquitted themselves exceptionally well (*ahl al-balā'*) received

48. Ibn Sallām, *Amwāl*, 140 § 379. Cf. Noth, "Zum Verhältnis," 157.

49. See Abū Yūsuf, *Kharāj*, 67–73, 86–87; Ibn Sallām, *Amwāl*, 57–59; Sarakhsī, *Sharḥ al-siyar*, III, 1039–40; Duri, "Taxation," 139–40; Forand, "Status."

50. See pp. 2371–72, 2468–69; Shaban, *History*, 49–50.

51. For a discussion of the emergence of these traditions in the Umayyad period, rather than at the time of the conquest, see Noth, "Zum Verhältnis," 162. See also Schmucker, *Untersuchungen*, 96ff.

52. See pp. 2411–14.

higher pay. Several significant exceptions were made: The Prophet's uncle al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib received the highest sum mentioned. This tradition seems to be an element in the glorification of al-'Abbās common to 'Abbāsid historians.⁵³ The Prophet's two grandsons, Ḥasan and Husayn; Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī; and Salmān al-Fārisī received sums equal to that awarded to the participants in the battle of Badr, though none of them belonged to this group. A similar exception was made for the wives and the concubines of the Prophet.

Distribution of booty also looms large in Ṭabarī's narrative. One of the principles followed by Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ was to award to every warrior the spoils of his slain enemy. 'Umar considered this course of action to be conducive to the morale of the troops, and he confirmed it even when Muslims had killed Persian notables and acquired spoils of reportedly enormous value.⁵⁴ In several instances these Muslims are said to have sold their valuable spoils for large sums of money.⁵⁵

V

In preparing this volume, I have attempted to make the annotation meaningful to students of Arabic and Islam as well as to non-Arabists. Wherever possible, I have prepared short biographies of persons who play significant roles in the narrative but are not included in such standard reference works as *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. I have also tried to highlight the ideas that are, in my opinion, implied in the text. In some cases I found it possible to elucidate obscurities of Ṭabarī's text by reference to parallel Arabic sources. I trust that Islamicists will bear with me for including in this introduction and in the notes material that they may deem superfluous and that non-Arabists will not be taken aback by the philological nature of certain notes intended primarily for the benefit of their Arabist colleagues.

Finally, I should like to thank Professor M. J. Kister for being generous as usual with his time, advice, and unrivaled erudition. Thanks are due also to Professor A. Arazī, with whom I discussed several poems included in this volume. Dr. A. El'ad read the pas-

53. See *EP*, s.v. "al-'Abbās b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib" (W. M. Watt).

54. See pp. 2340, 2342-43.

55. See pp. 2324, 2337, 2340.

sages on the conquest of Jerusalem and shared with me some of his insights. I am also indebted to Professor C. E. Bosworth and to Dr. E. Whelan for their painstaking editorial work. Needless to say, the responsibility for any imperfections, errors of judgment, or infelicities of style is mine alone.

Yohanan Friedmann

The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt
Volume XIII
Translated by Gautier H. A. Juynboll

This volume deals with the aftermath of the decisive battle at al-Qādisiyyah described in the previous volume. First, the conquest of southern Iraq is consolidated; in rapid succession there follow the accounts of the battles at Burs and Bābil. Then in 16/637 the Muslim warriors make for the capital al-Mada'in, ancient Ctesiphon, which they conquer after a brief siege. The Persian king seeks refuge in Hulwān, leaving behind most of his riches, which are catalogued in great detail. In the same year the Muslim army deals the withdrawing Persians another crushing blow at the battle of Jalūlā'.

This volume is important in that it describes how the newly conquered territories are at first administered. As the climate of al-Mada'in is felt to be unwholesome, a new city is planned on the Tigris. This is al-Kūfah, which is destined to play an important role as the capital city of the fourth caliph, 'Alī. The planning of al-Kūfah is set forth in considerable detail, as is the building of its main features—the citadel and the great congregational mosque.

After this interlude there follow accounts of the conquests of a string of towns in northern Mesopotamia, which bring the Muslim fighters near the border with al-Jazirah. That region is conquered in 17/638. The history of its conquest is preceded by an account of the Byzantines' siege of the city of Himṣ. Also in this year, 'Umar is recorded to have made a journey to Syria, from which he is driven back by a sudden outbreak of the plague, the so-called Plague of 'Amawās.

The scene then shifts back to southwestern Iran, where a number of cities are taken one after another. The Persian general al-Hurmuzān is captured and sent to Medina. After this, the conquest of Egypt—said to have taken place in 20/641—is recorded.

The volume concludes with a lengthy account of the crucial battle at Nihāwand of 21/642. Here the Persians receive a blow that breaks their resistance definitively.

This volume abounds in sometimes very amusing anecdotes of man-to-man battles, acts of heroism, and bizarre, at times even miraculous events. The narrative style is fast-moving, and the recurrence of similar motifs in the historical expose lends them authenticity. Many of the stories in this volume may have begun as yarns spun around campfires. It is not difficult to visualize an early Islamic storyteller regaling his audience with accounts that ultimately found their way to the file on conquest history collected by Sayf b. 'Umar, al-Tabarī's main authority for this volume.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XIII

The Conquest of Iraq,

Southwestern Persia, and Egypt

THE MIDDLE YEARS OF 'UMAR'S CALIPHATE

A.D. 636-642 / A.H. 15-21



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XIII

**The Conquest of Iraq,
Southwestern Persia, and Egypt**

translated and annotated
by

Gautier H. A. Juynboll

State University of New York Press

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash

(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

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The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



BOS: *Bonner Orientalistische Studien.*

El²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., Leiden, 1960—.

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Vol 1, Leiden, 1967.

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies.*

JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.*

JSAL: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam.*

WKAS: *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*, ed. M. Ullmann *et al.*, Wiesbaden, 1970.

ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.*



Translator's Foreword



This volume is almost exclusively associated with Sayf b. 'Umar (d. between 170/786 and 193/809), that controversial collector of material mainly dealing with the early conquests. With Oriental scholars in the Middle Ages as well as with western scholars during the last one hundred years or so, Sayf's material has always been a matter of debate as to whether or not it has any historical basis. However, this volume does not offer historical analysis; that I gladly leave to others better qualified. There is only one thing that I should like to dwell on briefly; that is the question of Sayf's seemingly inflated numbers.

If one reads through a volume such as this, one cannot help but wonder from where Sayf got his numbers. Presumably from his authorities. But who is responsible for inflating them? Now, whether it is Sayf himself, or an authority between him and Ṭabarī, or Ṭabarī himself (which seems the least likely), or an authority from Sayf down to the eyewitness of the event, who is responsible for multiplying the original numbers by a certain figure in order to inflate them is a matter of guesswork. In fact anybody qualifies; the question defies answering. But I cannot help feeling that if, just for the sake of argument, we assume that the anonymous multiplier consistently used *one and the same* multiplication coefficient for all the numbers, for sums of money as well as for numbers of soldiers participating in a certain battle, the modern reader would be able to reconstruct Sayf's numbers by dividing them by this same coefficient. The main problem we are left

with, then, is to decide on a hypothetical coefficient which, once applied, reduces Sayf's figures in such a way that the historical account becomes somewhat more plausible.

I have found that the constituting elements of the historical reports presented here become a great deal more believable when a certain division coefficient is applied. Then most of the reports begin to make historical sense, or at least, they cease to be utterly grotesque.

While I was doing the translation, it occurred to me that the figure one hundred could be deemed a suitable coefficient. Every number in a Sayf report divided by one hundred produces a result, the proportions of which are at least believable. Since nearly all Sayf's numbers are above one thousand, this could be done on a wide scale. Suddenly the accounts of "skirmishes" involving 5,000, say, become skirmishes (without quotes) in which only fifty take part, figures of one million dirhams become 10,000 dirhams, etc. Even if there is not a shred of evidence for this surmise, reading an historical account which is in so many other aspects delightful and in which the numbers assume believable proportions is, I think, a much more rewarding pastime than being constantly reminded of the compulsive inflation of the figures due to the interference of a collector/transmitter, who was under the impression that inflated numbers made his story more heroic and thus more popular.

But then, what do we do with figures that produce numbers too low to fit the context when divided by the coefficient one hundred? I have found that figures lower than one thousand, which divided by one hundred no longer make sense, do produce a plausible number when divided by, say, ten.

The figures ten and one hundred are not entirely random. There is one passage in which a certain vacillation with the transmitter in the multiplying of his figures seems to be discernible. See what happens: At a dangerous river crossing, the advance party sent ahead is first described as numbering six hundred, then from them a selection of sixty is made, but in the end the advance party actually identified by name as having established the beachhead comprises six people (plus one anonymous youngster). Six hundred-sixty-six. This last figure begins to make sense. So my choice of the coefficients ten and one hundred seems to work in

this particular context. Is it not tempting to consider this passage, which is presented by Ṭabarī at [p. 2433] below, also as one that allows us a peep into the workshop of our unknown multiplier with a seemingly obvious predilection for the decimal system?

There is another incident, not contained in this volume, but in Volume XII of this series, that conceivably might be taken as an indication that the coefficients one hundred, or with lower figures ten, have something to commend them [see Volume XII, [p. 2305]].

At a certain point in the battle of al-Qādisiyyah, reinforcements of 6,000 troops arrive from Syria to lend support. One of Sayf's heroes, al-Qa'qā' b. 'Amr, leads 1,000 of them to a particular spot, divides his riders into units of ten, and sends them into the fray. These tens, according to the account, make all the difference, and the Muslims, thus "reinforced," carry the day.

One may wonder, then, why the entire force of one thousand was not ordered to attack all at once? The overall outcome of the battle of al-Qādisiyyah could have been decided then and there. But no, it had to be achieved at the hands of units of ten. At the same time, we are asked to believe that units of ten, sent to reinforce an army of tens of thousands, make all that much difference, and if we assume that as large a number as one hundred or more units of ten were mobilized consecutively and sent into battle one after the other, we must realize that that is what the story sets out to convey, although it does not say so in so many words.

If we take this information at face value, we are asked to lend credence to the description of a battle, involving tens of thousands of troops on either side, in which *not* reinforcements totaling 6,000, but small units of ten, determine the outcome. Well, after all the numbers of Persians and Muslims on either side have been divided by one hundred, we are shown a battlefield and a military activity in which fresh injections of ten warriors each may conceivably have swayed the balance in favour of one of the warring parties toward victory, rather than stalemate or defeat. After this division coefficient has been applied, the story is no longer marred by "embellishments" in the shape of inflated numbers, which tend to put the reader off rather than entertain him. Other suitable division coefficients can be expected to give satis-

factory results, as in the case of collectors other than Sayf. Ten and one hundred have worked very well for me in this volume.

For a historiographical evaluation of Sayf's collection, see the recently published translation of A. A. Duri's classic, *The Rise of Historical Writing Among the Arabs*, index s.v. The *isnāds*, which Sayf frequently uses, are analyzed in Martin Hinds's paper "Sayf b. 'Umar's Sources on Arabia" in *Studies in the History of Arabia*, 1/2, 3-16. In his *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 446, F. M. Donner announces the forthcoming publication of a general study on early Arabic historical sources, which may be expected to contain new insights into the Sayf saga. Donner also grapples with the convoluted chronology of Sayf which is very much in evidence in this volume. The final word about this controversial issue has not been said, however.

In this translation, my principal objective has been to make Sayf's (or some other anonymous redactor's) difficult and at times ultra concise Arabic available in *readable* English. On numerous occasions that entailed having to add in parentheses words or phrases meant to facilitate comprehension (although, much to my regret, very many of these parentheses were subsequently removed by an editor). Readers interested in the ancient and often quaint Arabic prose of the original need simply skip these insertions. But by reading it in this way, one will quickly realize that, without the insertions, understanding what the early historian or eyewitness was driving at is no mean task. What makes the Arabic in this volume especially difficult is the often seemingly insoluble mishmash of unidentified pronominal suffixes and subject markers. Suffixes like *-hum*, *-hu*, and *-hā*, as well as their corresponding pronouns, occur by the dozen in relatively brief passages that abound in verbs whose subjects are left unspecified, thereby causing the translator many problems which at first defy solution. I was helped by realizing that many of these difficult passages may have begun as stories told by early Islamic storytellers (*quṣṣāṣ*), who facilitate their audiences' comprehension with the help of gestures. By pointing, for example, in one direction he indicates "the Muslims," in the other direction "the enemy," and so on, whereas in print we may only find the suffix *-hum* used in both cases.

In order to avoid stiltedness as much as possible, I have made

use of the following devices: I have cut up extended parataxis by resorting to hypotaxis conveying the same meaning. That has also entailed translating main clauses as if they were *hāls* or relative clauses. Conversely, I have tried to enhance readability by translating many secondary clauses, *hāls* and *şilahs* as main clauses. Thus I have often rendered secondary clauses introduced by *hattā* followed by a perfect with "Finally. . . ." Furthermore, in many instances, it seemed a good idea to translate *hāls* as relative clauses and vice versa. But on the whole I have kept close to the original Arabic.

However, with the numerous poetic fragments scattered over this volume, I have taken the liberty of rendering them somewhat more freely. The reason for this, as well as the methods followed, are outlined in Appendix I. Here we also find a running commentary on the verses, as well as less free renderings, where that has been deemed necessary.

Appendix II contains an early twentieth-century plan of the situation around the city of Tustar, once allegedly besieged by Muslim forces, a siege described in this volume. This description tallies so remarkably well with the details given in Sayf's account that I have decided to include it.

Apart from Sayf, whose reports constitute the bulk of this volume, we occasionally encounter Ibn Ishāq, al-Wāqidī, al-Madā'inī and a few others. But on the whole, this is a Sayfian volume, as the style in which most of the reports are composed makes abundantly clear to those familiar with Ṭabarī's *Annales*. Sayf's material has rarely been drawn upon by other historians. Ibn al-Athīr copied, or better excerpted, Ṭabarī's Sayf material for his own work, but the fact that he left out virtually every passage whose interpretation posed the slightest problem in my view justifies the surmise that Ibn al-Athīr did not himself grasp the meaning, or if he did, perhaps he thought that his readers would not. At any rate, parallel passages in other historical works are few and offer barely any textual overlap that might have helped in the interpretation of Sayf's original. The only other historical work containing extensive Sayf passages is still in manuscript; I mean the *Kitāb al-Maghāzī* by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh Ibn Ḥubaysh (d. 584 [1147]). This work is preserved in two manuscripts, one in Berlin and one in Leiden.

Apart from two Istanbul manuscripts containing sections of Ṭabarī's *Annales* called C and Co, which can be considered as fairly defective, Eugen Prym, the editor of the Ṭabarī volume of which this book is a partial translation, had no more manuscript material at his disposal than the manuscripts of Ibn Ḥubaysh's work.

While translating this volume, I have made frequent use of the Leiden Ibn Ḥubaysh (Or. 342). In spite of repeated efforts, I have not been able to obtain microfilms of the Istanbul manuscripts. In the end, I had to make do with Prym's text as it stands. Although I have the greatest admiration for that scholar's obviously phenomenal knowledge of, and feeling for, this ancient Arabic, his edition still contains many passages with which there are some things wrong and which seem to defy any attempt at emendation. Even so, on a few occasions I have proposed corrections duly discussed in the notes.

Of all the friends and colleagues who have given a hand in the solving of the numerous problems encountered in a translation of this kind I shall name here just a few. Thus I should like to thank Peri Bearman (Leiden) and Robert Hillenbrand (Edinburgh) for the care they exercised in going over parts of this translation to rid it of infelicities of style.

But, more than anybody else, Martin Hinds (Cambridge) helped me with constant advice. He read the entire volume and gave me freely of his incomparable expertise. His numerous judicious suggestions and ingenious emendations are scattered throughout the footnotes. He also drew my attention to a number of secondary sources and studies unknown to me, which proved to be valuable in the interpretation of many obscure passages. His untimely death in December of 1988 was a great shock to me, as to all his friends. In deep gratitude and affection I dedicate this volume to his memory.

G. H. A. Juynboll

The Conquest of Iran
Volume XIV
Translated by G. Rex Smith

This volume covers the years 21-23/641-43 of the caliphate of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. It can be divided into two distinct and almost equal parts: The first concerning the Muslim conquests in Iran and the east, and the second concerning 'Umar himself, his assassination, and an assessment of the caliph and the man.

The volume begins with the caliphal order to the Muslim troops, recently victorious at the famous battle of Nihāwand in 21/641, to penetrate farther into infidel lands in the east. The might of the Persian empire had been broken, and a golden opportunity offered itself to the Muslim community to expand its territories. The territorial gains thus achieved are recounted in this volume. Moving out of the garrison towns of al-Kūfah and al-Basrah, the Muslim forces' conquests of Iṣfahān, Hamadhān, al-Rayy, Qūmis, Jurjān, Tabaristān, Azerbaijan, Khurāsān, parts of Fārs province, Kirmān, Sijistān and Makrān as far as the Indus, are all described in these pages.

Contained in these accounts of far-reaching conquests are the peace documents, which are of considerable historical importance. They are typically the documents issued by the victorious Muslim commanders on the ground to the subjugated local inhabitants, laying out in precise terms the obligations of the latter toward their Muslim conquerors in return for safe conduct.

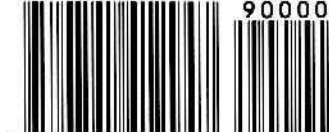
Leaving the Muslim forces on the bank of Indus, Ṭabarī switches his account to Medina, where in 23/643 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb was assassinated by a Christian slave. After full accounts of this deed, the reader is provided with details of the caliph's genealogy, his physical description, his birth date and age, the names of his children and wives, and the period of time he was a Muslim. A lengthy section follows, in which the deeds of 'Umar are recounted in anecdotal form. There are also quotations from his addresses to his people and some poetic eulogies addressed to him.

The volume ends with 'Umar's appointment of the electoral council, five senior figures in the Islamic community, to decide on his successor, and the fascinating and historically greatly important account of the workings of the council with all the cut and thrust of debate and the politicking behind the scenes. Thus was 'Uthmān b. 'Affān appointed to succeed 'Umar.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XIV

The Conquest of Iran

A.D. 641–643 / A.H. 21–23



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(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XIV

The Conquest of Iran

translated and annotated
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Abbreviations

Cairo: al-Ṭabarī, *Ṭa'rikh*, Cairo edition.

CHIr: *Cambridge History of Iran*.

CHIs: *Cambridge History of Islam*.

Elr: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

El¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed.

El²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*.

Glossarium: Glossary in al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*: *Indices, Introductio, Glossarium, Addenda et Emendanda*.

SEI: *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

Selection: M. de Goeje, ed., *Selection from the Annals of Tabari*.

Ṭabarī: al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, Leiden ed.

Translation: al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī*.

Translator's Foreword

This volume of Ṭabarī's text (I, pp. 2634-2798 of the Leiden edition and IV, pp. 137-241 of the Cairo edition) covers the period 21-23/641-43 and can be divided into two distinct and almost equal parts: the first concerning the conquests under 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in Iran and the east, which gives this volume its title, and the second concerning 'Umar himself, his assassination, and an assessment of the caliph and the man.

The text translated in this volume owes much to Ṭabarī's informant Sayf b. 'Umar, a controversial figure who has occasioned some comment. Although much trusted by Ṭabarī for the early period of Islamic history, Sayf is not used as an informant by others. He has, for example, been accused of presenting inconsistent accounts and of overemphasizing the role of his own tribe, Tamīm. References to assessments of the mysterious Sayf are given below, p. 1 n. 3.

Historical Background

'Umar had assumed the caliphate in 13/634, the immediate successor of the first caliph, Abū Bakr (11-13/632-34). Abū Bakr's first major problem had been how to hold together the young Islamic community that had been built by the Prophet and that immediately after his death threatened to disintegrate. Some tribes of the Peninsula felt no further loyalty to the community and its leader, and they had anyway, increasingly with

their geographical distance from Medina, only tenuous links with Muḥammad and the religion of Islam. This cannot be the place for a detailed discussion of Abū Bakr's determined efforts to bring these tribes back into the fold, efforts that have gone down in history as the so-called Riddah wars or the wars of Apostasy. What can be said with confidence is that these Riddah wars, as the Muslim warriors fighting them moved farther and farther away from the center of Islam and out of the control of the head of the Islamic community (a point to which I shall return below in the context of 'Umar himself), gradually merged into wars of conquest. Whatever one's view of the military activities of the Muslims during the brief caliphate of Abū Bakr, it is true to say that by the time of 'Umar's assumption of the caliphate in 13/634 we are talking only in terms of conquest.

The Conquests

Two fronts initially opened up, the Syrian and the Iraqi. The former attracted less attention from Ṭabarī, who compiled all history in terms of an eastern center with every other area or province on the periphery. Without becoming too involved in the massive problem of the discrepancies in the dates of the conquests (a second point to which I feel compelled to return briefly below), we can probably say that the majority of Greater Syria had fallen to the Muslims by 15/636 and that the Byzantines under Heraclius were in full retreat from the area. On the second front, according to Ṭabarī's accounts, Iraqi towns such as Babylon, al-Madā'in, the old Sasanian capital, and Tikrit had been taken by the Muslims in the year 16/637-638. Of tremendous importance was the resounding victory secured by the Muslim forces under Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ at al-Qādisiyyah, when a huge Sasanian army under Rustam dissolved in panic. Such a victory left the Sasanian empire to the east vulnerable to attack and penetration by the forces of Islam. As we shall see from Ṭabarī's accounts of the eastern conquests in this volume, they were not slow to take advantage of their success and of the weakness of a once mighty empire. In the following year (17/638-639), again according to Ṭabarī, al-Kūfah was founded as a Muslim garrison town in southern Iraq, and the conquering armies began to raid into the province of Fārs.

Turning aside almost incidentally from his other accounts under the year 20/640–641 to chronicle the events of the conquest of Egypt and Alexandria, Ṭabarī then recounts the details of one further major Muslim victory in the east, the last before the text of which this volume is the translation opens. This victory happened in 21/641 at a place called Nihāwand, east of Baghdad and south of Hamadhān (see map). Sa'd once again led the Muslim forces. The defeated Persians were on this occasion led by their last Sasanian emperor, Yazdajird III, who, however, survived the defeat. His further attempts to undermine the Islamic eastern conquests can be read below. With two such major victories behind them, al-Qādisiyyah and Nihāwand, the Muslims stood poised to penetrate into the territories of the Sasanian empire and beyond. At this point this volume opens.

The following text covers the last two years of 'Umar's life, 21–23/641–643. Under those years Ṭabarī's accounts of the territorial gains of the Muslim armies, who move out of the two garrison towns of al-Kūfah and al-Baṣrah, include such important centers and areas as Isfahān (21/641–642), Hamadhān, al-Rayy, Qūmis, Jurjān, Ṭabaristān, Azerbaijan, Khurāsān (all in 22/642–643), parts of Fārs province, Kirmān, Sijistān, and Makrān as far as the Indus (all listed under 23/643–644, also the year of 'Umar's assassination).

Neither Ṭabarī himself nor his informants were at all interested in military strategy, and it should be stated at the outset that the reader only rarely finds reference to tactics, and then usually of a very primitive kind. The almost stereotyped pattern that emerges is as follows. The Muslim supreme commander reaches his goal, frequently the names of his generals in the van, in the rear, and with the two wings of the army are all given as a prelude to the battle. A siege may ensue; there may even be personal combat to decide the issue, and this frequently provides an interesting anecdote. If battle is actually joined, the divinely guided Muslim army defeats the polytheist enemy. Muslims are occasionally killed, but they are invariably heroes who lay down their life in God's cause and who frequently have a premonition of their fate and prepare for the supreme sacrifice. The enemy may, however, see the strength and moral superiority of the Muslim forces and that is sufficient to bring about a quest for peace without fighting.

The Peace Documents

The several peace documents given verbatim by Ṭabarī in this text are of some interest and would indeed repay deeper study. On the important question of authenticity, perhaps all that can be said in such a brief introduction is that it might be wise to assume that the texts, although presented verbatim, represent the fourth/tenth-century view of what such texts might have said rather than the first/seventh-century original. In particular, the relationship between the circumstances of the peace and the contents of the document itself might perhaps be further investigated. Invariably, in return for their safe-conduct and the freedom to practice their faith and live in accordance with their own laws, the conquered peoples are required to assist the Muslims in various ways. They are required to give sound advice, to provide hospitality, to keep the roads free of highwaymen, to guide the Muslims, and so on. Most important, they must in all cases pay tribute to the Muslims, this payment being imposed on all those above the age of puberty, although at a rate that they can afford to pay. The tantalizing hints in this volume of the associated questions of military service and exemption from the tribute should also be looked at more closely. The document spells out the dire consequences, should the conquered peoples harm the Muslims in any way or break the terms of the document.

Control of the Conquests

With the peace document signed and witnessed, Ṭabarī tells the reader of the Muslim commander's despatch of trusty messengers to inform the caliph in Medina of the victory and to deliver the fifths of the booty for the community treasury in accordance with early established Islamic practice. 'Umar frequently uses the messenger's return to send further directions and military orders to his commanders in the field. Indeed, letters and documents pass freely between caliph and general. The reader should perhaps, however, be aware that 'Umar may not have controlled the Muslim military effort in quite the way in which Ṭabarī's accounts would have us believe. Such reports appear to ignore

entirely the sheer geographical impossibility of delivering documents hundreds of miles in frequently appallingly difficult terrain, perhaps through only half-subdued regions, in short periods of time. The occasional message from Medina is of course possible, but one can perhaps assume that the military and administrative decisions in connection with the conquests that had to be taken were taken by commanders on the spot in the front line.

Dates of the Conquests

One of the greatest problems facing students of early Islamic history is that of the precise dates and chronology of the conquests. It is a problem that can be seen at its most acute in Fred Donner's *The Early Islamic Conquests*, in this case with particular reference to the Syrian front. The serious discrepancies in the dating of campaigns and battles of conquest have even been used to discredit in general the early Muslim sources that touch on the conquest. One can do little more here than to indicate that such a serious problem does exist and that perhaps the reader should beware. It should be stressed, however, that, serious though these discrepancies in the accounts of the conquests, and in particular in the dates provided, undoubtedly are, they certainly cannot be used to discredit the text as a whole.

'Umar—the Caliph and the Man

The second part of the text here translated begins with the graphic account of 'Umar's assassination by a Christian slave, Abū Lu'lu'ah, in 23/643. Several dates are given for his death. We are further presented with his genealogy, physical descriptions, different accounts of his birth date and age, the names of his children and wives, and the period of time that he was a Muslim. A lengthy section follows recounting in anecdotal form the deeds of 'Umar, followed by examples of several of his Friday addresses. Some poetic eulogies are quoted. The volume ends with 'Umar's appointment of the electoral council, five senior figures in the Islamic community, to decide on his successor and the fascinating account of the workings of the council,

with all the cut and thrust of debate and the politicking behind the scenes.

Physically 'Umar was immensely tall, head and shoulders above the crowd. Although he was dark, we are told that his skin was pale and perhaps blotchy. He had a bald patch on the top of his head. He was never elegantly dressed, quite the opposite in fact, and is invariably portrayed in a simple waist wrapper. By natural disposition, he was rough and ready, eating at home inferior food with some greed and toting a stick or whip, which he was never afraid to use on the person. A blow dealt, however, might be regretted later and the victim of his brusque behavior eventually compensated in some way. He was never afraid of stripping down and throwing himself into some hard, sometimes dirty, work, whether it be feeding hordes of the poor in the midday sun or treating camels with tar. He is portrayed as absolutely scrupulous in all his dealings with money. Wealth set aside by the community for the public good was inviolate; he was often personally short of money. Gifts, however insignificant, taken from campaign booty with the approval of the troops on the front and delivered to him in Medina brought only an angry response, sometimes a box round the ears, as the messenger was sent away to return the gift to its rightful place with the rest of the spoils. He could be extremely kind and compassionate and the anecdote of the woman and her starving children, which is given below, is famed as an example of 'Umar's pity toward those suffering great hardship.

The Texts Used and Parallel Texts

The texts used in this translation are those of Leiden and Cairo (see Bibliography). This section of the text in the First Series of the Leiden edition was edited by E. Prym. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm's Cairo text in fact adds little or nothing to Prym's editorial effort, though on occasions it is preferred for the purposes of translation. The Egyptian scholar's punctuation often helps the process of interpretation, though again sometimes it is misleading. Serious problems clearly remain in both editions, although all one's sympathies are fully on the side of Prym, and his editorial endeavors deserve nothing but praise.

Such problematic passages are quoted here in transliteration in footnotes, at times at some length.

The only truly parallel text—and then it does not cover all the ground of the *Ta'rikh* by any means—is Ibn al-Athīr's *Kāmil*, which is, however, a slavish, verbatim copy of Ṭabarī. It is therefore of very limited use, but I have nevertheless kept the reader informed of the parallel text in the footnotes. Ya'qūbī's *Tārikh* is extremely thin at this early period, although I have where necessary referred to it in the footnotes. Bal'ami's so-called abridgment of Ṭabarī's text in Persian I have found useful, from time to time it is extremely so, not only clarifying, but even adding to, the Arabic text. Balādhuri's *Futūḥ* has proved invaluable. It is an excellent check on facts and figures, although it frequently presents an entirely different view of a particular conquest. The *'Iqd* of Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, who was a contemporary of Ṭabarī, quotes the latter's account of the electoral council almost verbatim. References to it have been given in the footnotes, particularly where they help with the interpretation of the text.

The Translation

Two problems in connection with the translation of the text have been dealt with in a manner that requires clarification. The first is the constant use in the original of pronouns—sometimes referring to nouns distant from them, sometimes referring to no noun at all! In this I have followed what seems to be the sensible method of the translator of Volume XV of this series (see his Translation and Editorial Conventions p. xxi). I use parentheses () to surround the noun to which the pronoun refers where merely to use a pronoun in English would be to create ambiguity, possibility even incomprehension. I have also used brackets [] to surround any additions supplied for the purpose of a clearer and smoother understanding of the text.

The second problem arises because of the total nonexistence in Arabic of reported or indirect speech. All conversations in the original are in direct speech and always introduced by nothing more precise than *he said/she said/they said*. Where it seems to me important to retain the original direct speech, I have done so.

Where, however, the constant direct speech appears ridiculous, I have not hesitated to convert it to indirect speech. In either case I have also not hesitated to use a little imagination and to introduce verbs like *reply*, *retort*, *exclaim*, instead of the ubiquitous *said*.

Footnotes and Bibliography

I have made every endeavor to identify all personal, place, and tribal names found in the text. As for the first, there is a great problem in particular with the narrators whose names appear by the dozens. In this case I have consulted the standard biographical dictionaries. Where persons remain unidentified, I have indicated this clearly in my footnotes. Thanks to the excellent geographical coverage of the eastern part of the Islamic empire by Yāqūt and other geographers and to such studies as Le Strange's *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*, among others, place names have not been difficult. Reference works on tribes, too, are on the whole adequate. I have also used the footnotes to add explanations where it seems to me that the text requires them, particularly for the non-Arabist and to quote the original Arabic in transliteration in the cases of problematic and corrupt passages. The bibliography lists those works quoted in the footnotes, with in addition one or two other works that I have found particularly valuable during my work on this translation.

Acknowledgments

There remains the pleasant task of acknowledging the kind assistance of Professors C. E. Bosworth and J. Derek Latham. Both gave extremely generously of their time and effort to read through the manuscript of this volume; both made numerous suggestions for the improvement of the text and the notes. I am enormously grateful to them both. Successive postgraduate seminars in Durham and Manchester have benefited me greatly, and I must finally mention Mushallāḥ al-Muraykhī with particular thanks.

G. Rex Smith

**The Crisis
of the Early Caliphate
Volume XV**
Translated by R. Stephen Humphreys

Before the caliphate of the 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, the Muslim community had grown from strength to strength in spite of a series of major crises—the Hijrah, the death of the Prophet, the Riddah wars, the assassination of 'Umar by a Persian slave. But 'Uthmān's reign ended in catastrophe. His inability to manage the social and political conflicts that were now emerging among various factions within the community led to his death at the hands of Muslim rebels. The consequences of this tragic event were bitter: not only a century of civil war, but also political and religious schisms of such depth that they have not been entirely healed even now. Most medieval Muslim historians told this story in an overtly partisan manner, but al-Ṭabarī demands more of his readers. First of all, they must decide for themselves, on the basis of highly ambiguous evidence, whether 'Uthmān's death was tyrannicide or murder. But, more than that, they must ask how such a thing could have happened at all; what had the Muslims done to bring about the near-destruction of their community?

Al-Ṭabarī presents this challenge within a broad framework. For, even while the internal crisis that issued in 'Uthmān's death was coming to a head, the wars against Byzantium and Persia continued. The first expeditions into North Africa, the conquest of Cyprus, the momentary destruction of the Byzantine fleet at the Battle of the Masts, the bloody campaigns in Armenia, the Caucasus, and Khurāsān are all here, in narratives that shift constantly between hard reporting and pious legend. Muslim forces retain the offensive, but there are no more easy victories; henceforth, suffering and endurance will be the hallmarks of the hero. Most evocative in the light of 'Uthmān's fate is the moving account of the murder of the last Sasanian king, Yazdagird III—a man betrayed by his nobles and subjects, but most of all by his own character.

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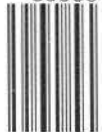
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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XV

The Crisis of the Early Caliphate

THE REIGN OF 'UTHMĀN

A.D. 644-656 / A.H. 24-35



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(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME XV

The Crisis of the Early Caliphate

translated and annotated
by

R. Stephen Humphreys

University of Wisconsin, Madison

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash

(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

EP²: Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition

IJMES: International Journal of Middle East Studies

JSS: Journal of Semitic Studies

SEI: Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam

WKAS: Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache

Translator's Foreword

Ṭabarī as Narrator and Interpreter of 'Uthmān's Regime

When 'Uthmān b. 'Affān acceded to the caliphate in 24/644, he inherited a new but already imposing empire. The main field armies of Byzantium and Sasanian Iran had been crushed, and a rudimentary administration had been established in the newly conquered territories of Arabia, Egypt, and the Fertile Crescent. The struggle to bring Anatolia and the Iranian plateau under Islamic domination continued and was bitterly contested, but Muslim Arab forces retained the offensive on all fronts. Not only wartime booty but also vast tax and tribute revenues were flowing into Medina and the provincial capitals of Kufah, Basrah, Damascus, and al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Nevertheless, the new Islamic state was already afflicted by serious internal stresses. The caliphate had very little control over its provincial governors and field commanders; the proud tribal leaders (the *ashrāf*) were loath to submit to government authority of any kind. There were resentments over the benefits lavished on some men and not others, there was even rivalry within the inner circle of the Prophet's Companions. Altogether, it is hardly surprising that 'Uthmān governed in an atmosphere of growing tension, and ultimately of crisis.

Political crisis degenerated into open rebellion by troops from Egypt and Iraq, and rebellion ended in the murder of the aged caliph. 'Uthmān's bloody death opened nearly a century of civil

war, Muslim set against Muslim, as a host of factions and sects struggled to reestablish the government of God within the Islamic community. In these struggles, there were momentary victors who succeeded in seizing control of the apparatus of government, but the underlying conflicts and issues were never fully resolved—nor have they been even to this day. One could make a case that the murder of 'Uthmān was the single most formative event in early Islamic history. It was not only a matter of the host of immediate and long-term consequences that flowed from this act. Rather, 'Uthmān's death compelled Muslims to confront crucial questions not only about the mutual claims and obligations of rulers and subjects in Islam, but also about the fundamental nature of the relationship between God and His community. The disparate and conflicting answers that they evolved to these questions became the very substance of Islamic political thought, theology, and law.

In this light, it is no surprise that early Muslim historians devoted extraordinary attention to the caliphate of 'Uthmān, and especially to its final phase. Nor is it surprising that Ṭabarī's account is in some sense the definitive one—not only the largest and most comprehensive, but also the one that most accurately reflects the many controversies surrounding this tragic figure. More fully and precisely than in any other source, we find in Ṭabarī the irreconcilable differences of interpretation and judgment that 'Uthmān's reign engendered among Muslims. As to his own opinion, he remains as always a master of cunning. The naive reader sees a sympathetic and even laudatory portrayal of a rightly guided caliph, the critical reader must confront ambiguity, internal contradiction, and the impossibility of reaching a definitive judgment.¹

Ṭabarī does not present us with a unified narrative. His text is a complex mosaic of verbatim citations from older sources, most of them compiled in the late second/eighth and early third/ninth centuries. Through the careful juxtaposition of self-contained anecdotes and reports, Ṭabarī is able to present many different perspectives on any given incident or topic. A reader (whether Ṭa-

1. M. G. A. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam* (Chicago and London: 1974), I, 352–53.

barī's contemporary or a modern one) might well suppose that he is thereby obtaining independent testimony on these events, but here caution is in order.

I am persuaded that we cannot accept these texts as direct and authentic (albeit partisan) accounts of the events themselves. Rather, we should regard them as literary constructions that tell us not what actually happened, but rather what 'Uthmān meant to men living a century or more after him. I do not mean that Ṭabarī's narratives are mere inventions; clearly they are in some way rooted in real things that happened to real people. On the other hand, it is not at all clear that we can penetrate to the core of fact that lay behind these stories. On some level, 'Uthmān's reign will always remain veiled in the controversies and values of the later generations who compiled the sources that Ṭabarī used. Ṭabarī's relationship to the reign of 'Uthmān is rather like the relationship of Tolstoy to the Napoleonic Wars. If we had nothing but the novel *War and Peace*, what would we really know about Alexander I, Kutuzov, and Napoleon himself?²

Ṭabarī uses a formidable array of sources for his account of 'Uthmān, but three historians provide the bulk of his material. His narrative of the wars in Iran is drawn mostly from 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Madā'inī (d. 855), either directly or through the transmission of 'Umar b. Shabbah. Al-Madā'inī is himself a compiler and editor of much older materials, but he has imposed a considerable degree of clarity and coherence on his sources. Most remarkable, no doubt, is the long series of narratives on the death of Yazdagird III, the last Sasanian king of Iran.

For events in Iraq and Arabia—the real key to the crises of 'Uthmān's caliphate—Ṭabarī relies chiefly on Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Wāqidi (d. 823) and the mysterious Sayf b. 'Umar (d. ca. 800). Both of these authorities raise real problems. Al-Wāqidi writes well-organized, concrete narratives, full of telling detail and significant conversations. His informants are for the most part identifiable and even well known. His accounts are in fact a

2. These statements are of course influenced by the arguments of Petersen and Noth, though I am perhaps a degree less skeptical than they. E. L. Petersen, *Alī and Mu'āwiya in Early Arabic Tradition* (Copenhagen: 1964); Albrecht Noth, *Quellenkritische Studien zu Themen, Formen, und Tendenzen frühislamischen Geschichtsüberlieferung* (Bonn: 1973).

little too good—too well crafted, too pointed. It is clear from other contexts (e.g., the wars of the Prophet) that al-Wāqidī was not above elaborating on older and more austere narratives, and he may be suspected of the same thing here. In addition, he displays a detectable pro-'Alid bias, though that in itself should not disqualify his testimony. In any case, medieval Muslim commentators did not regard him as wholly reliable; perhaps they had better reason for this than we sometimes think.³

It is Sayf b. 'Umar who is most troubling, however. Ṭabarī shows a unique fondness for him, in two senses. First, Sayf is the source most heavily used by Ṭabarī for the whole period from the Riddah Wars to the Battle of Šiffin (A.H. 11–37). Second, no one beside Ṭabarī appears to use Sayf at all. There is no obvious way to explain Ṭabarī's preference. It is certainly not explained by the formal characteristics of Sayf's narratives, for he relies on informants who are usually obscure and often very recent. Likewise, he makes heavy use of the "collective report," which blends together in unspecified ways the accounts of several transmitters.⁴

I would suggest that Sayf appealed to Ṭabarī for two reasons. First, Sayf presents a "Sunday school" interpretation of 'Uthmān's caliphate. In his presentation, one sees a profound unity and harmony within the core community of Muslims, a unity and harmony founded on strict fidelity to the legacy of Muhammad. It is unthinkable that men such as those portrayed by Sayf could have been moved by worldly ambition or greed. On the contrary, in Sayf's presentation most conflicts are illusory, a reflection of malicious misinterpretations by later commentators. Where real conflicts did arise among sincere Muslims, they were instigated by outsiders like the notorious 'Abdallāh b. Sabā', a converted Jew from the Yemen.

On this level, at least, Sayf's version of events is obviously a very naive one, and no doubt Ṭabarī perceived that as clearly as we do. Even so, it served a very useful function for Ṭabarī. By making Sayf's reports the visible framework of his narrative, he could slip in the much less flattering interpretations of early

3. I wish to thank Dr. Lawrence Conrad for drawing this issue to my attention.

4. Martin Hinds, "Sayf b. 'Umar's Sources on Arabia," *Studies in the History of Arabia*, I, part 2 (1979), 3–16.

Islamic history presented by his other sources. Ordinary readers would dismiss this dissident testimony as irrelevant, and only a few critical readers would catch his hint and pursue the issues raised by such secondary accounts. In this way, Ṭabari could say what needed to be said while avoiding accusations of sectarianism. Accusations of this kind were of course no small matter in view of the enormous social and religious tensions in Baghdad during the late ninth and early tenth centuries.⁵

Ṭabari, I think, found something else almost equally valuable in Sayf's narratives. Sayf is seldom content merely to give a bald account of events. Rather, he uses events as a springboard for overt reflection on religious and moral themes, expressed through the mouths or pens of his protagonists. These reflections tend to be filled with sentimental piety, and I would argue that they were strongly influenced by popular preaching, by the art of the *quṣṣāṣ*, who were so esteemed by ordinary people and so suspect in the eyes of scholars. Such elements of popular piety allowed Sayf's protagonists to emerge as larger-than-life heroes of the faith. More than that, such heroes sanctified the very events in which they were involved, removing these events from the gritty realm of profane strife and bloodshed, transforming them into sacred history.

The events of 'Uthmān's reign could be profoundly disheartening to Ṭabari's own contemporaries, beset as they were by violence and sectarian conflict on every side. It was easy to lose all hope, to imagine that the venture of Islam had been for nothing. The events of 'Uthmān's caliphate might well suggest that Islam had in fact been betrayed even in the lifetime of the Prophet's Companions. In such a milieu, Sayf's account of 'Uthmān was an antidote to cynicism and despair, for it proclaimed that in the face of schism and rebellion, there were true Muslims who had remained faithful to the covenant that they had assumed under Muḥammad. And whatever evils had since befallen, the deeds of these early heroes stood as a symbol of hope, and a call to steadfastness, even in the gloom of Ṭabari's troubled age.

5. Cf. Hodgson, *Venture*, I, 353.

The State of the Text

I have based this translation on the text established by Eugen Prym in the Leiden edition directed by M. J. de Goeje. I have also consulted the recent Cairo edition prepared by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. However, for this part of the text Ibrāhīm used no manuscripts unknown to Prym. To all intents and purposes, then, his text is the same as that of the Leiden edition, though he does incorporate many of the corrections suggested in vol. 14 (*Introductio, Glossarium, Addenda et Emendanda*). In addition he supplies punctuation, which is often helpful in unscrambling convoluted passages, as well as a very few emendations of his own.

Prym's text is based on four manuscripts, none of them complete:

1. Istanbul, Köprülü 1041 (C in the apparatus): pp. 2845–2851. According to the colophon, copied in Cairo in 651/1253.⁶
2. Istanbul, Köprülü 1043 (Co): pp. 2799–2892, 2914–2926. A very handsome volume, probably copied for the library of the Ayyubid prince of Mayyāfāriqīn, al-Muẓaffar Ghāzī (618–641/1221–1244).
3. Oxford, Bodleian Marsh 394 (O): pp. 2799–2923, 2940–2944, 2953–2980.
4. Berlin, Sprenger 41 (B): pp. 2897–3065. A very old manuscript, copied in 447/1055.

It should be noted that Prym could not see the important Istanbul manuscripts for himself, but had to depend on transcripts of varying reliability made for the Leiden project. Unfortunately, a trip to Istanbul in the autumn of 1984 only confirmed that no new manuscripts for this part of Ṭabarī are to be found, though the Köprülü volumes would certainly demand direct scrutiny in any

6. De Goeje (*Introductio*, liii ff.) erroneously identifies this volume as Köprülü 1042. In fact, K. 1041 covers the period from A.H. 5 to 65, but with very long gaps between 21 and 61. The pages in this volume are frightfully scrambled, as if they had been tossed into the air and rebound in the order in which they fell to the ground. K. 1042 is a volume of the same size and format, but it is written in a different (and far clearer) hand, and covers the years A.H. 158–302.

future edition.⁷ More important, perhaps, is that we are dependent on a single witness (namely, the Berlin manuscript) for long stretches of the text, especially the crucial last eighty-five pages. No doubt many of the textual difficulties in this section of Ṭabarī are connected with that fact.

In order to confirm or clarify the text, as well as to fill in a few missing lines and words, Prym drew on as many parallel texts as were available to him, and de Goeje refers to others in the *Addenda et Emendanda*. Of these Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī al-Ta'rikh* is clearly the most important. In fact, however, Ibn al-Athīr is seldom of much help, since the more obscure passages are either reproduced verbatim or omitted altogether. This fact might suggest that he did not understand them either. In using Ibn al-Athīr, we need to recall that our oldest and best manuscripts were produced in Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia between the late twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries—that is, precisely when Ibn al-Athīr was composing his own chronicle. The manuscript tradition available to us is therefore probably the very same one that he used.

A great many relevant texts have been published since the turn of the century, of course, and in an ideal world I would have brought all these to bear. For reasons of practicality, however, I drew only on the *Ansāb al-Ashraf* of Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī (d. 892), which gives us the longest and most important account of 'Uthmān's reign after that of Ṭabarī himself. Balādhurī draws chiefly on Wāqidī, and he therefore provides a useful check on Ṭabarī's use of this important source. However, we cannot expect exact textual parallels, because Balādhurī gives us paraphrases of his sources, whereas Ṭabarī favors verbatim citations.

To sum up, this translation is based on a serviceable Arabic text—certainly the best that could have been produced in de Goeje's day. There is, however, room to try again. A direct examination of the Istanbul manuscripts and the use of parallel texts

7. I wish to acknowledge the generous support of the American Philosophical Society, which funded my trip to examine the Ṭabarī manuscripts in Istanbul, London, and Oxford in autumn 1984. I hope to publish elsewhere a fuller discussion of the problems raised by these manuscripts.

published since 1900 (e.g., Balādhurī, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Ibn Ḥubaysh, Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī, Ḥassān b. Thābit) would probably resolve some of the puzzles in the existing text; at the very least, they would provide a broader context for them.

R. Stephen Humphreys

Transliteration and Editorial Conventions

In transliterating Arabic names and terms, I have followed the usage of the *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*, which has become standard in North America.

Two editorial conventions in this translation call for comment:

1. Square brackets [] are used to enclose words and phrases which do not appear in the Arabic text. I have either added such words and phrases for the sake of clarity, or else I have taken them from a parallel text. In the latter case, the source of the words is identified in a footnote.
2. Parentheses () are used for two purposes: (a) to indicate Arabic technical terms or particularly significant expressions in the passage being translated; (b) to specify proper names or other words which are expressed by pronouns in the Arabic text. The antecedents to these pronouns are often very uncertain, especially in the narratives of Sayf b. 'Umar, parentheses allow me to propose a reconstruction of Ṭabarī's meaning while alerting the reader to the ambiguity of the original.

The Community Divided
Volume XVI
Translated by Adrian Brockett

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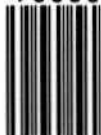
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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XVI

The Community Divided

THE CALIPHATE OF 'ALĪ I

A.D. 656-657/A.H. 35-36



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XVI

The Community Divided

translated and annotated
by

Adrian Brockett

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the History of al-Ṭabarī, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear in the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Humayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as "dirham" and "imām," have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

To
Fiona and Andrew
with love



Abbreviations



*EI*¹: *The Encyclopaedia of Islām*, 1st ed., 4 vols and Supplement, Leiden and London, 1913–42

*EI*²: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., Vol. I–, Leiden and London, 1960–

EIr.: *Encyclopædia Iranica*, Vol. I–, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1985–

IA: Ibn al-Athīr, 'Izz al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥasan 'Alī, *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rikh*, ed. C. Tornberg, repr., Beirut, 1965, Vol. III

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

IQ: *Islamic Quarterly*

JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*

RSO: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*



Editors' Foreword



The section of al-Ṭabarī's *History* dealt with in the present volume covers pp. 3066–3256 of the Prima Series in the Leiden edition, which was prepared under the general direction of M. J. de Goeje. It deals with the events of the latter part of the year 35/656, beginning with the election of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as caliph after the assassination of 'Uthmān, and the events of 'Alī's reign in the greater part of 36/656–57. The chronicler then passes on to an account of the confrontation between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān at Ṣiffīn on the upper Euphrates, the Khārijite secession, and the murder of the caliph by a Khārijite assassin.

The events during this single year or so were momentous and were to have resonance through much of subsequent Islamic history. In dealing with them al-Ṭabarī was almost exclusively concerned with the heartland of the caliphate, that is, northern and central Arabia (including the original centers of the new faith of Islam, Mecca and Medina) and southern and central Iraq, where, during the reign of the second caliph, 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the Arab *muqātilah*, or warriors, had defeated the might of Sasanian Persia and driven the Sasanian ruler and his demoralized forces east across the Iranian plateau. It was along the fringes of the Mesopotamian lowlands and the northern Arabian desert—from which access to reserves of fresh Bedouin manpower was easy—that 'Umar had set up the two great military encampments (*miṣr*) for his warriors, al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah. 'Alī was eventually to move his capital to al-Kūfah from Medina, the home of the Prophet Muḥammad for the ten years before his conquest of Mecca and

the capital of the first three Rightly Guided caliphs; the political capital of the Islamic world was never again to return to the Arabian peninsula, which became increasingly a backwater, often held by sectarian groups like the Khārijites and, nearly three centuries later, the radical Shī'ite Carmathians.

Although al-Kūfah, with a strongly, but not exclusively Yemenī, or southern Arab, tribal element in its population, proved generally sympathetic to 'Alī and, at various points in the following Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid periods, to his descendants, al-Baṣrah speedily became the epicenter of resistance to 'Alī's claim to the caliphate after 'Uthmān's murder. A rebellion of anti-'Alid forces took shape there, under the leadership of two veteran Companions of the prophet, Ṭalḥah b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Taymī and al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām al-Asadī, both from aristocratic clans of Quraysh and former members of the *shūrā*, or consultative council, that 'Umar, on his deathbed, had appointed to regulate the succession. They thus considered themselves to have as valid a claim to become Commander of the Faithful as did 'Alī. These two leaders had the backing of 'Ā'ishah bint 'Abī Bakr, the Prophet's favorite wife and daughter of the first caliph. Although 'Ā'ishah had supported the opposition to 'Uthmān, she had had no hand in the tragic events leading to his death and had come to regard 'Alī as at least a passive accomplice in the killing. All three rebel leaders feared that the infant Arab state would be dominated by anarchic and uncontrollable Bedouins in al-Kūfah and elsewhere, who were becoming 'Alī's main supporters. There was thus a distinct possibility that the more aristocratic and conservative elements of Quraysh, which these leaders represented, would be relegated to a less powerful role in the state.

The outcome of this clash of interests was the Battle of the Camel on 10 or 15 Jumādā II 36/4 or 9 December 656, in which Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr were killed; 'Ā'ishah was subsequently deported under escort to retirement in Medina by the victorious 'Alī. In the present volume al-Ṭabarī gives a highly detailed account of the events leading up to the battle, from the *bay'ah*, or giving of allegiance to 'Alī in Medina (accounts vary as to whether Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr gave their allegiance to the new caliph willingly, grudgingly, or not at all), and 'Ā'ishah's raising the call for "vengeance for 'Uthmān." Then there is a lengthy account of the

battle itself, which took place outside al-Baṣrah, the center of support for the rebels, in which 'Ā'ishah, in an armored howdah on her camel, was the insurgents' rallying point and the real instigator and inspiration of the troops. Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr were quarrelsome and somewhat indecisive leaders, both laboring under the handicap of accusations that they had broken their oath of allegiance to 'Alī.

This volume ends with the triumphant caliph precariously in control of Arabia and Iraq and sending governors to such provinces as Egypt and Khurāsān. He had to accept a de facto division of the Islamic lands, with his rival Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān as governor of Syria and the Byzantine marches and the latter's influential supporter 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ al-Sahmī as governor of Egypt. The remainder of 'Alī's rather brief caliphate was to be spent in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to humble the much more experienced and sagacious Mu'āwiyah, to restore the unity of the caliphate under his own leadership, and to combat the violent and irreconcilable Khārijite secessionists from his own army, who would, in fact, bring about his death.

All these events left a legacy of dissension that was to resound through Islamic history for centuries to come, involving such basic political and religious questions as how the caliph or imām was to be chosen, what should be his qualifications for office, and what should be the basis of the *ummah*, the community of true believers? Above all, these events were part of the prehistory of the Shī'ite movement in Islam, which came to involve such vexed points as the position of 'Alī and his descendants: Should they be regarded, as Shī'ite partisans were to assert, as the rightful spiritual and political heirs of 'Alī's cousin Muḥammad and the Prophet's daughter Fāṭimah, possessors of a divine light of guidance for the faithful implanted in all the 'Alids by God? Or had their political and military incompetence disqualified them from leadership of the community in favor of the much more capable Umayyads and 'Abbāsids? The debate continues today.

For this section of al-Ṭabarī's text the editor was the Bonn scholar Eugen Prym. For the earlier part of the preceding section on 'Uthmān's caliphate Prym had at his disposal as many as four manuscripts (see R. Stephen Humphreys, "Translator's Foreword" in Volume XV *The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*, pp. xviii–xix),

but for the latter part of that caliph's reign he had only the Berlin manuscript Springer 41 (*siglum* B). This manuscript was also the only one available for the present volume, and Prym had to seek elucidation of difficult passages and readings in the works of the later historians Ibn al-Athīr, in his *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rikh*, and al-Nuwayrī, in his *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, supplemented by occasional references to such historical and biographical works as al-Dīnawarī's *al-Akhhbār al-ṭiwāl*, al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*, Ibn al-Athīr's *Usd al-ghābah*, Ibn Ḥajār's *Iṣābah*, al-Dhahabī's *Mīzān al-i'tidāl* and *al-Mushtabih fī asmā' al-rijāl*, and Ibn Taghrībirdī's *al-Nujūm al-zāhirah*, as well as to such geographical works (primarily for place names) as al-Bakrī's *Mu'jam mā ista'jam* and Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-buldān*.



Translator's Foreword



This volume of al-Ṭabarī's history deals with the traumatic break-up of the Muslim community following the assassination of the caliph 'Uthmān. It begins with the first seriously contested succession to the caliphate, that of 'Alī, and proceeds inexorably through the rebellion of 'A'ishah, Ṭalḥah, and al-Zubayr, to the Battle of the Camel, the first time Muslim army faced Muslim army. As such, it deals with the very first violent response to the two central problems of Muslim history: Who is the rightful leader? Which is the true community? It is therefore a section with the most weighty implications for the Muslim interpretation of history, wide open to special pleading. There are the Shī'a who depict 'Alī as a spiritual leader fighting against false accusation and the worldly ambitious. Conversely, there are those who would depict him or his followers in a negative light, and there are the 'Abbāsid historians, who, while anti-Umayyad, have to balance reverence for the Prophet's household (*ahl al-bayt*) with a denunciation of 'Alid antiestablishmentarianism. All these points of view, and more, are represented in al-Ṭabarī's compilation, illustrating the difficulty the Muslim community has had as a whole in coming to terms with these disastrous events.

Acknowledgment

Many thanks to my friend, Muhammad Munir 'Abd al-'Aziz, for many enjoyable discussions about the text.

Adrian Brockett

The First Civil War
Volume XVII
Translated by G. R. Hawting

Many of the events treated in this volume have become part of the historical consciousness of Muslims. The first civil war of Islam, the Fitnah, is widely seen as of decisive importance in dividing the Muslims into three major traditions, Sunnīs, Shī'is, and Khārījīs, which have persisted until today. Although this division may be an over-simplification of a much more complex process of community formation, the events narrated here are certainly of great importance in the early history of Islam.

The volume is focused on the struggle between the caliph 'Alī and his rival and eventual successor as caliph, Mu'āwiyah, the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty. About half of the material is concerned with the confrontation between the two at the battle of Ṣiffin in 657, the fighting, the ending of the battle when the Syrian supporters of Mu'āwiyah are described as having attached Qu'rānic texts to their lances, and the subsequent negotiations between the two rivals which resulted in the dispute's being put to arbitration. Much detail is also provided about 'Alī's struggle against the Khārījīs, his former supporters who had turned against him as a result of his agreement with Mu'āwiyah to accept arbitration; the revolt against 'Alī in regions of Iraq and Persia around the northern edges of the Persian Gulf, which involved Christians, as well as Muslims, Arabs, and such non-Arab groups as Kurds; the events in Egypt that led to the burning of 'Alī's representative there in the skin of a donkey; and the murder of 'Alī by Ibn Muljam, the account of which sometimes reads as if it were a popular story.

Al-Ṭabarī's text makes available a wealth of detail in narratives collected from the now lost compilations of scholars of earlier generations. The bulk of the material is cited from the famous Abū Mikhnaḥ, who died in A.D. 774, but there are also many reports from other traditionists and narrators whose materials would be largely unknown to us if it were not for the work of al-Ṭabarī. The volume contains a number of speeches and letters attributed to the Prophet's son-in-law and cousin 'Alī, including his deathbed speech to his sons, and there is also a version of the document drawn up by 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah in which they agreed to appoint arbitrators.

The Arabic text of the Leiden edition of al-Ṭabarī has been compared with the more recent Cairo edition and with the substantial parallel passages in such other works as the *Waq'at Ṣiffin* of al-Mingārī and the *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah* of Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, as well as other sources, in an attempt to provide a secure text for translation. Individuals and places are identified in the footnotes, further references to sources and secondary literature are provided, and textual problems and historical matters are discussed. The volume contains a bibliography and index.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XVII

The First Civil War

FROM THE BATTLE OF ŠIFFĪN TO THE DEATH OF 'ALĪ

A.D. 656-661/A.H. 36-40



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī

(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XVII

THE FIRST CIVIL WAR

translated and annotated

by

G. R. Hawting

School of Oriental and African Studies,
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State University of New York Press

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Preface



The history of prophets and kings (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about 200 pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear in the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—)

between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the notes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as "dirham" and "imam," have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the notes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



Add. et emend.: List of *addenda et emendanda* included in the final volume of the Leiden edition of the text of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*.

AIUON: *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli*.

Ann.: L. Caetani, *Annali dell'Islam*, 10 vols., Milan, 1905-26.

Ar.: Arabic.

BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*.

Cairo: The edition of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh* by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 10 vols., Cairo, 1960-69.

Ibn al-Kalbī: Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat al-nasab*, as rearranged and tr. W. Caskel and G. Strenziok, *Ġamharat an-nasab. Das genealogische Werk des Hišām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī*, 2 vols., Leiden, 1966.

EP¹: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed.

EP²: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, 1967.

Gloss.: Glossary included in the final volume of the Leiden edition of the text of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*.

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

Isl.: *Der Islam*.

JESAI: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*.

JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*.

JSS: *Journal of Semitic Studies*.

LA: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-'arab*, 15 vols., Beirut, 1955- .

Lane, Lexicon: E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*. 8 vols., London, 1863-93.

RSO: *Rivista degli studi orientali*.

SI: *Studia Islamica*.

SNB: Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah*, 20 vols., ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm. Cairo, 1959–63.

Ṭabarī: When followed by a reference, the Leiden edition of the Arabic text of the *Ta'rikh*.

tr.: translation.

WS: al-Minqarī, *Waq'at Šiffīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn. 2nd ed. Cairo, 1382/1962–63.

In references to the Qur'ān the verse numbering of the Egyptian edition is used.



Translator's Foreword



The Events Described in This Volume: Background and Summary

This volume of translation covers Part I, pp. 3256–3476, of the Leiden 1879–1901 edition of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*, a section of the text edited by E. Prym. To provide the necessary background for the events recounted in it, a summary of some of the happenings reported by al-Ṭabarī in earlier volumes is provided here.

In the summer of 656 C.E. the third caliph, 'Uthmān, was killed in Medina by malcontents from the garrison town of al-Fuṣṭāṭ in Egypt. This act opened the period known in Muslim historical tradition as the *Fitnah*, which Western writers have frequently called the *first civil war* of Islam. In the tradition the word *fitnah* is used in connection with later episodes, too, but this first one is regarded as of such importance that it is often referred to simply as the *Fitnah*, without further elaboration.

'Alī, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muḥammad, was appointed to the caliphate in Medina in the troubled circumstances that followed the killing of 'Uthmān. From the start he had to face opposition from individuals and groups who generally proclaimed their loyalty to the dead caliph and a desire to take vengeance on his murderers. They charged that 'Alī had obtained the caliphate as the result of an unrighteous act (although usually stopping short of an outright statement that he had been behind 'Uthmān's death) and called upon him to hand over the killers so that blood revenge

could be taken. The implication was that 'Alī's caliphate was illegitimate, and he was neither able nor willing to comply with the demands of his opponents.

The first movement of opposition to 'Alī was led by a widow of the Prophet, the still relatively young and vigorous 'Ā'ishah, and two prominent Companions of the Prophet, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr. They left the Hījāz and went to the garrison town of al-Baṣrah in Iraq, where they raised an army to fight 'Alī. He followed them to Iraq but went to the other garrison town there, al-Kūfah, which supplied most of the forces with which he would oppose the triumvirate. At the end of 656 the two sides met in battle near al-Baṣrah, known in tradition as the Battle of the Camel, and the result was an overwhelming victory for 'Alī. Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr were killed in the fighting and its aftermath, and 'Ā'ishah was made captive and sent back to Medina. 'Alī remained in al-Kūfah, which was his base for the remaining years of his life and a center for pro-'Alīd movements of all sorts for the next century or so.

At that point, having apparently secured his position, 'Alī was confronted by another enemy, the governor of Syria and close relative of the murdered 'Uthmān, Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān. Mu'āwiyah, whose criticisms of 'Alī also centered on the wrongful murder of 'Uthmān and included the demand that 'Alī hand over the killers for vengeance, was supported by 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ. 'Amr had commanded the armies that had seized Egypt for the Arabs from the Byzantines and had been that country's first Arab governor. In the tradition he appears very much as Mu'āwiyah's right-hand man, one might say his evil genius.

The present volume of the translation of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh* consists of reports concerning a period for which the struggle between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah supplies the main theme and focus of attention. It opens at the point where, after initial discussions between them had come to nothing, the two marched to confront each other in battle, a confrontation that occurred in the summer of 657 on the River Euphrates south of al-Raqqah, at the Battle of Ṣiffīn. The volume ends, about three and half years later, with the murder of 'Alī in al-Kūfah.

A large part of the volume is concerned with the Battle of Ṣiffīn, its conclusion, and the consequences of the way in which it was

concluded. Following 'Alī's march to Siffin, we are told of the preliminary skirmishing, the fighting, and the way the fighting was brought to an end when the Syrian Arab soldiers of Mu'āwiyah, at the suggestion of 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ, attached copies of scripture to their lances and raised them in the air. Faced with this apparent appeal to the word of God, 'Alī's Iraqi Arab supporters forced him, against his will, to stop fighting and to negotiate with the enemy. The result was an agreement between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah that each side should appoint a representative or "arbitrator" (*ḥakam*) and that the two men thus appointed should meet in the future at some agreed upon place and time to settle the dispute peacefully. The agreement having been reached, the two armies separated and returned, Mu'āwiyah to Syria and 'Alī to al-Kūfah.

On the way back to al-Kūfah, however, many of those who had insisted that 'Alī abandon the fight and accept the Syrians' appeal to the word of God concluded that they had sinned in doing so. They argued that the appointment of men as arbitrators was contrary to the principle that all authority belonged to God. With the slogan "Authority belongs to God alone" (*la ḥukma illa li-Allah*), these men insisted that 'Alī begin the fight again, and, when he insisted that he could not, they branded him a sinner who must repent and seceded from him. These seceders are known as the Khārijites (*khawārij*), because they "went out from" (*kharaja min*) or rebelled against (*kharaja ʿalā*) 'Alī. Initial attempts by 'Alī to win them back are said to have had some limited success, but ultimately were unsuccessful, and the result was a major battle between 'Alī and these Khārijites at the canal of Nahrawān east of the River Tigris in the region of al-Madā'in. The battle resulted in a mass slaughter of the Khārijites but not the eradication of their opposition to 'Alī.

The reports about the meeting of the "arbitrators" are confusing and obscure. They lead to the conclusion that no agreement was reached but that 'Alī's participation in the arbitration process had caused him to lose status and prestige. His position was further weakened by Mu'āwiyah's success in establishing his authority over Egypt. How Mu'āwiyah did this and the events leading to the killing of 'Alī's representative there, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, are described in some detail. In Iraq 'Alī had to face another rebellion, that of al-Khirrīt b. Rāshid and the tribe of Nājiyah. It is difficult to assess

the importance of this rebellion for 'Alī: The numbers of men involved do not seem to have been great, but the reports about it occupy considerable space in this volume. Although al-Khirrīt does not seem to have been connected with those men whose opposition to 'Alī culminated in the battle at Nahrawān, he is reported to have used some of their arguments (as well as others when addressing different groups of possible supporters), and some of the stories about him are remarkably parallel to some of those about the Khārijites. Also of interest in the reports about his revolt are the details concerning the unrest of the bedouins (including many Christians) and the involvement of Kurds.

The volume ends with the account of 'Alī's murder in al-Kūfah at the beginning of 661, an account that bears some of the signs of a popular narrative. We are told that he was killed by one Ibn Muljam, who is portrayed as motivated by a desire to avenge himself on 'Alī for those whom 'Alī had slaughtered at Nahrawān. Further, we are told that the murder of 'Alī was the only successful part of a plot aimed at the elimination of each of the three main players in the events recounted in this volume: 'Alī, Mu'āwiyah, and 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ.

Most of the other events reported here seem to have been more or less directly related to 'Alī's struggles with Mu'āwiyah and the *khawārij*. For example, there are accounts of the death of 'Alī's pious supporter 'Ammār b. Yāsir in the battle against Mu'āwiyah's Syrians, of the troubles in al-Baṣrah when Mu'āwiyah sent Ibn al-Ḥaḍramī there to attempt to win support, of the expedition of Busr b. Abī Arṭāt, sent against 'Alī's representatives in Arabia and the Yemen by Mu'āwiyah, of the activity of Ziyād b. Abīhi in Fārs and Khūzistān on behalf of 'Alī, and of the dubious behavior of 'Alī's representative in al-Baṣrah, 'Abdallāh b. al-'Abbās, toward the end of the Fitnah. Two short and isolated reports of the attempt by 'Alī to establish control in western Khurāsān seem somewhat remote from the main theme.

The Significance and Interpretation of the Events Recounted Here

In the traditional accounts of the origins and early development of Islam the period of the Fitnah is of crucial importance. It is

portrayed as the time when the previously united community founded by the Prophet was split apart and the three chief sectarian traditions within Islam—Sunni, Shī'ī, and Khārijī—had their origins. Not only the Fitnah as a whole, but also the prominent events within it, like the "raising of the Qur'āns," the appointment and meeting of the two "arbitrators," and the battle at Nahrawān, came to be seen as turning points in the history of Islam. This view is undoubtedly oversimplified, but in their attitude toward the different individuals and groups involved in the Fitnah later Muslims expressed and defined their own identities. Many of the events and personalities of this volume, therefore, have become a part of general Muslim historical consciousness in a way in which much else that is reported by al-Ṭabarī in his *History* has not.

But, in spite of the number of reports that have been transmitted and the richness of their detail, there is much about the Fitnah and its individual episodes that remains puzzling. The relative chronology and causal links of the various events are not at all certain from the sources and have been the subject of much discussion by such scholars as Leone Caetani and Julius Wellhausen. The nature of the tensions that erupted in the Fitnah have also been much studied. Wellhausen, like Muslim tradition itself, focused on the rivalries and intrigues among the leading figures of the time, whereas more recent scholars, like H. A. R. Gibb and Martin Hinds, have sought to elucidate the situation among the Arab warriors in the garrison towns and the causes of their resentment against the ruling authorities. Laura Veccia Vaglieri has attempted to use the material preserved in relatively late Ibādī sources to throw light on what exactly was at issue between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah and about what the two "arbitrators" were supposed to "arbitrate." The source material relating to the struggle between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah, as preserved by al-Ṭabarī and other early collectors of historical tradition, has been analyzed in particular by E. L. Petersen. The present translator has drawn attention to parallels between some of the terms and concepts that occur in the Muslim traditions about the Fitnah and those to be found in Jewish materials concerned with the conflict between Scripture and "Oral Law" as sources of religious authority. For more detail, see the works listed in the Bibliography of Cited Works at the end of this translation and the various articles in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* referred to in the notes.

Al-Ṭabarī's Sources in This Volume

In this volume as elsewhere al-Ṭabarī cites a selection of material from a number of earlier sources, most of them now lost, introducing each individual report with an *isnād*, or chain of authorities, which informs us of his immediate source and of the sources of his source. The *isnād* usually extends back to a narrator who took part in, or had first-hand knowledge of, the events being reported. The *isnād* is usually given in full but sometimes in an abbreviated form. It is not possible for us to be sure whether any individual report does indeed go back to the original source claimed for it or how far the material that constitutes the report has changed in the course of its transmission and redaction.

Although the alleged original sources for al-Ṭabarī's reports are extremely numerous and varied, many of them unidentifiable, the names of a number of scholars and narrators about whom we have some information recur frequently in the later stages of the transmission. These individuals can be regarded as precursors of al-Ṭabarī. Like him, they were concerned to collect, organize, and transmit available accounts relating to various aspects of the history of Islam. Basic information on each of these important names in the *isnāds* is usually given in a note accompanying the first mention.

For the events reported here, by far the most frequently cited of al-Ṭabarī's sources is the Kūfan collector of historical traditions, Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774). The material from Abū Mikhnaf is generally cited by way of another Kūfan traditionist, Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 206/821). From p. 3259 to p. 3444 of the Leiden edition nearly all the reports are recounted from Abū Mikhnaf, who was himself one or two generations distant from the events in question. In the later pages of the volume, particularly when the focus is on al-Baṣrah and its dependencies, al-Ṭabarī turns to reports collected by al-Madā'inī (d. ca. 235/850), transmitted through 'Umar b. Shabbah (d. 264/877). Less frequently Ibn Shabbah is cited as the transmitter of reports from collectors of tradition other than al-Madā'inī, for example, the Baṣran scholar Abū 'Ubaydah (d. 209/824–825) or the Kūfan 'Awānah b. al-Ḥakam (d. 153/770), whose material al-Ṭabarī more often cites via Ibn al-Kalbī.

In comparison with these two major sources of material (Ibn Kalbī—Abū Mikhnaḥ and Ibn Shabbah—al-Madaʿinī and others), al-Ṭabarī makes only limited use of others in this volume. In attempts to fix chronology, often in the sections that he provides at the end of each year, he sometimes cites two figures who are better known as collectors of biographical material on the Prophet—Abū Maʿshar (d. 170/787), cited through Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī, and al-Wāqidi (d. 207/822–823), cited via al-Ḥārith—Ibn Saʿd. The volume opens with a report from ʿAbdallāh b. Mubārak (d. 181/797), cited through ʿAbdallāh b. Aḥmad al-Marwazī, and this line of tradition recurs on a number of occasions later in the volume, for events in Egypt and in Arabia, as well as in connection with the Battle of Siffin and the arbitration agreement. The long account of the murder of ʿAlī near the end of the volume is reported from Mūsā b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Masrūqī (d. 258/871–872), and there are several other traditionists of the generation preceding al-Ṭabarī who are represented in this volume by single reports: Abū Kurayb, Yaʿqūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī and his brother Aḥmad, ʿUmāra al-ʿAsadī, Muḥammad b. ʿAbbād b. Mūsā, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Rāzī, ʿAlī b. Muslim al-Ṭūsī, and ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan al-Azdi.

Manuscripts and Parallel Sources

Most of the text translated here depends on the evidence of a single manuscript, and for a few pages there is no manuscript at all. At that point Prym had to supply the text from a later source in which al-Ṭabarī is extensively cited. From the beginning of the volume (p. 3256 of the Leiden edition) to p. 3364, line 4, where the manuscript ends, Prym had only the Berlin manuscript Ahlwardt 9417 to work with. From p. 3368, line 18, the only manuscript available was in Istanbul, Köprülü 1045, until, until almost at the end of this volume (p. 3463, line 11), it became possible to supplement that with a Bodleian manuscript (Uri 722).

In such circumstances, naturally, the evidence of other sources in which al-Ṭabarī is quoted or parallel passages are provided becomes very important. Prym had several printed texts at his disposal for this purpose, notably the *Taʾrīkh al-Kāmil* of Ibn al-Athīr, from which he was able to fill the lacuna in the manuscript evidence for this volume (pp. 3364, l.4–3368, l.18). Since the Leiden

edition was published several more such texts have become available. Two that are of special importance for much of this volume are the *Waq'at Šiffin* of Naṣr b. Muzāḥim al-Minqarī (d. 212/827) and the *Sharḥ Nahj al-balāghah* of Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (d. 656/1258). In the latter both al-Ṭabarī and al-Minqarī are cited extensively, and both were used by the editor of the Cairo edition of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ*. Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, to supplement the Leiden text. (Although the Cairo editor had some new manuscript material for parts of the text, it seems that there was no such new evidence for the part translated in this volume.) The edition of the *Waq'at Šiffin* referred to in the Cairo text is the first; the opportunity has been taken here to supply references to the much-improved second edition of the work.

I have been unable to undertake a systematic checking and improvement of the Leiden edition, a task that would involve a search for new manuscript material and extensive reference to parallel sources. Even so, I have sometimes been able to suggest improvements, and I hope that this volume of translation and its notes will be of benefit to anyone using the Arabic text.

The Translation

With one or two exceptions (indicated in the notes) the translation in this volume is based on the text established in the Leiden edition of Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ*, including *Addenda et Emendanda*.

This volume contains a high proportion of letters and speeches that include rhetorical flourishes and expressions difficult to translate into English and sometimes difficult to understand. The chief problem, however, is that certain important words tended to be reinterpreted in the course of the transmission of the material and to be given new or altered meanings according to changing understanding of events. In such cases, the translator might seek to establish and convey the meaning that a particular expression would have had at the time when a report was first formulated (perhaps in the time of the Fitnah itself) or, alternatively, the sense in which al-Ṭabarī and his contemporaries would have understood it.

An example concerns words that seem to denote "scripture." Since the publication of John Wansbrough's *Quranic Studies* (1977), a number of scholars have been wary of accepting the traditional view

that a *ne varietur* consonantal text of the Qur'ān was fixed as early as the caliphate of 'Uthmān. They have, rather, envisaged the formation of the text and its acceptance in Islam as the Word of God as the results of a gradual, "organic" process. The process may not have been completed much before the end of the second century of the Hijrah, although precise dates are not possible; it is the gradualness of the process that is the important point. Expressions like *kitāb Allāh* (book of God), *muṣḥaf* (book), and *Qur'ān* (recitation or reading), which occur in the traditions about the Fitnah and the other events of early Islam, would certainly have been understood by al-Ṭabarī's generation as references to the Qur'ān, and it is difficult for readers of al-Ṭabarī to avoid imposing the same interpretation. Nevertheless, it is important to try to understand early ideas and expressions that may have been preserved in the material collected by al-Ṭabarī and others, and this effort involves attempting to disentangle them from the values and outlook of Islam as it had come to exist by the third century. Our understanding of the precise significance, at the time of the events reported in this volume, of expressions like those mentioned may be vague and obscure, but it is important to leave the possibilities open. To translate consistently by "Qur'ān," with all that the term implies for us, is to accept possibly misleading interpretations.

Qurra' is a related case. In Muslim tradition it tends to be associated with the Qur'ān, and a common modern translation is "Qur'ān readers" or "Qur'ān reciters." This translation might seem justified when we find in one report the expression *qurra' al-Qur'ān*, but some modern scholars have thought that in many traditions such an interpretation seems inappropriate (for example when we read of the thousands of *qurra'* fighting in Mu'āwiyah's army at Siffin), and various theories have been put forward as to who precisely the *qurra'* were. In a recent article in which he put forward his own interpretation, Norman Calder has underlined one cause of the problem: The texts, as they have been transmitted, have come to incorporate different layers of interpretation, often contained in glosses and substitutions that are not readily apparent. In this way early material might have been adapted to reflect later interpretation.

A further example is the concept of *ḥukm* and the various nouns and verbs derived from the same root. When embedded in stories

about the "arbitration" of the dispute between 'Alī and Mu'āwiyah the concept seems to have a limited and particular meaning, whereas in the Khārijite slogan mentioned previously it seems related to a much more general debate about sources of authority in religion. When the context provides no guidance, the meaning of the word may be ambiguous.

Clearly, such problems are not unique to this volume. Apart from those parts of his *History* related to his own time, all of al-Ṭabarī's work contains material that has been subject to the vicissitudes of transmission over generations in a period of significant and relatively rapid cultural change. Generally I have taken what seems to be the obvious course: I have indicated the occurrence of difficult words and expressions sometimes by giving the Arabic (either in brackets or in the notes) together with the translation, sometimes by leaving words untranslated and supplying a brief explanation or references to more extensive discussions in notes. The resulting loss of elegance or narrative flow seems a necessary price to pay.

In one important way translating this volume was made easier. All the material (apart from a few lines that seem to have puzzled the collaborators) is available in an Italian version produced in the 1920s by such scholars as Caetani, Giorgio Levi Della Vida, and G. Gabrieli, in volumes IX and X of Caetani's *Annali dell'Islam*. Although I did not always accept the translations offered there, the *Annali* provided a consistent way of checking my own, and I often found the editors' solutions to some of the trickier passages convincing. The notes and discussions that are appended to the Italian translation also remain valuable, even though the approach, often criticized as "positivist," now seems somewhat dated.

I am also very grateful to Professor Everett K. Rowson for his meticulous editing of the typescript of my translation. He made numerous comments and suggestions, some of which saved me from obvious mistakes and many of which I used to try to improve my efforts. Thanks are also due to those friends, colleagues, and students who responded to my many questions.

Translation often involves choosing one possible meaning from two or more, and it is inevitable that some will feel that I have made the wrong choices in particular places. Perhaps even more inevitable is the fact that this volume will contain actual errors, and for any

remaining I accept responsibility. It would not be true to say that the errors themselves were inevitable.

G. R. Hawting

**Between Civil Wars:
The Caliphate of Mu'āwiyah
Volume XVIII
Translated by Michael G. Morony**

This volume presents for the first time in English Ṭabari's complete account of the twenty-year long reign of the fifth caliph, Mu'āwiyah (661–680). The importance of this account lies partly in Ṭabari's quotation of major portions of the work of earlier authors, such as Abū Mikhnaḥ and other eighth-century compilers. It is also significant because Ṭabari's selection of themes has had a decisive influence on modern interpretations of this period, particularly on the identification of what the important issues were in the works of Henri Lamens and Julius Wellhausen. Here one can read the exciting account of the Khārijī revolt of Mustawrid ibn Ullifah, the impressive but controversial record of the governorship of Ziyād b. Abihi, the entertaining escapades of the poet Farazdaq in his youth, and the tragic story of Huḥr ibn 'Adī. Ṭabari's presentation of different points of view about these and other events makes his account an indispensable source for early Islamic history.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XVIII

Between Civil Wars:

THE CALIPHATE OF MU^cĀWIYAH

A.D. 661-680/A.H. 40-60



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The History of al-Tabarī
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VOLUME XVIII

**Between Civil Wars:
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Mu^cāwiyah**

translated and annotated
by

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabari's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain.

Thus, According to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Humayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place-names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place-names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as qāḍī and imām, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place-names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

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Translator's Foreword



The reign of Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān as Caliph occupied the two decades between the first and second civil wars among Muslims in the seventh century. Ṭabarī's account of this period is comparatively thin. He covers it in half the space he devoted to the first civil war and in the same amount of space that he gave to the three-year reign of Mu'āwiyah's son and successor, Yazīd. In addition, Ṭabarī's selection of events overwhelmingly concentrates on Iraq and Khurāsān during these years, and his information is drawn mainly from Iraqi sources.

Over sixty percent of this section comes from the earlier works of Abū Mikhnaf and 'Umar b. Shabbah. The works of Abū Mikhnaf are quoted mainly via Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī and are used especially for the events at al-Kūfah, the Khārijites, and the affair of Hujr b. 'Adī. 'Umar b. Shabbah's *Book of Information About the People of al-Baṣrah* (*Kitāb akhbār ahl al-Baṣrah*) is quoted directly by Ṭabarī not only for events at al-Baṣrah, but also for events in Syria and the Ḥijāz.

Except for Ziyād's inaugural speech at al-Baṣrah in 665 and parallel passages in C. E. J. Whitting's translation of Ibn Ṭabāṭabā's *Kitāb al-Fakhri* (London, 1974), the material in this volume has not been available in English before. However, the section on Mu'āwiyah in Balādhuri's *Ansāb al-Ashraf* was translated into Italian by Giorgio Levi della Vida and Olga Pinto as *Il Califfo Mu'āwiya I, secondo il "Kitāb Ansāb al-Ashraf"* (Rome, 1938). Special thanks go to Abdullah al-Askar who helped to check this translation.

Michael Morony
University of California, Los Angeles

The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah
Volume XIX
Translated by I.K.A. Howard

This volume deals with the caliphate of Yazīd. Yazīd was not accepted as a legitimate caliph by many of the leading Muslims of the time, and, therefore, al-Ṭabarī has concentrated his account of Yazīd's caliphate almost entirely on the opposition to him. This opposition had its leadership in two of the leading Islamic figures of the time, al-Ḥusayn, the son of the caliph 'Alī, and Ibn al-Zubayr, a leading Muslim who felt that he had had some claims to the caliphate himself. The first revolt was led by al-Ḥusayn. This revolt, although ineffectual in military terms, is very important for the history of Islam, as al-Ḥusayn came to be regarded by Shi'ite Muslims as the martyred imām; his martyrdom is still commemorated every year by them.

In his account al-Ṭabarī has preserved for us some of the earliest historical writing on the subject. The amount of space he devotes to this event shows the importance it had already assumed by his own time. The second revolt, that of Ibn al-Zubayr, was much more serious in immediate terms. The revolt or civil war can be divided into two stages. This volume covers the first stage, ending with the timely death of Yazīd, which saved Ibn al-Zubayr from defeat.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XIX

The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah

A.D. 680–683 / A.H. 60–64



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l mulūk)

VOLUME XIX

The Caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah

**translated and annotated
by**

I. K. A. Howard

University of Edinburgh

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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Translator's Foreword

This section of Ṭabarī's history, which is devoted to the caliphate of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah, is in fact almost entirely concerned with the reactions of two men to his recognition as Caliph. Apart from this, Ṭabarī merely records the names of governors and *qādis* and gives a brief description of a campaign in Khurāsān. These two men, al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām, represent two of the most influential Islamic families. They are the sons of two great Islamic leaders and they oppose Yazīd's succession. Thus, the central question involved in the caliphate of Yazīd is the constitutional question of succession.

In order to understand Ṭabarī's handling of this problem, it is useful to examine what sources he used and how he used them. Two earlier historians, Dīnawarī (d. 282/895-6) and Ya'qūbī (d. 292/905), have given accounts of these events. Like Ṭabarī, they concentrate on the opposition to Yazīd's caliphate from al-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr, but their accounts are summaries and interpretations of previous historical writings without clear references to their sources, whereas Ṭabarī's account is much more detailed and through the use of *isnāds* (chains of authority) gives us a much clearer picture of the sources he used. A third historian, Balādhurī (d. 279/892), has, in his *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, provided us with a detailed picture, which enables us to check Ṭabarī's account. Sometimes Balādhurī gives summaries introduced by *qālū* ("they reported") and sometimes he gives even more detailed accounts than Ṭabarī with their *isnāds*. He also provides

versions, not given by Ṭabarī, that help balance the account. A fourth earlier historian, Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ (d. 246/860), briefly deals with al-Ḥusayn and gives more space to Ibn al-Zubayr but very limited information.

Of the later historians, Mas'ūdī provides accounts which, although lacking *isnāds*, can be seen to come from the same sources as those used by Ṭabarī. The Shī'ite al-Mufid (d. 413/1022) gives a slightly abbreviated version of Ṭabarī's account of al-Ḥusayn, which is almost certainly taken from Ṭabarī. Similarly Ibn al-Athīr uses Ṭabarī's for his version. These three accounts add very little to our knowledge about the historical writings on the event, but they do help to check and understand Ṭabarī's text. The same is the case with regard to Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyyīn* (d. 356/967) which, by and large, provides confirmation of the basic sources used by Ṭabarī for the accounts of the deaths of al-Ḥusayn and his followers, but through a different transmission.

With regard to al-Ḥusayn, a third type of historical writing emerges in the account of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī (d. 314/926). This is hagiographical literature with the feats and exploits of al-Ḥusayn exaggerated to the point of almost miraculous actions. Similar hagiographical writing is found in the clearly forged work that was attributed to Abū Mikhnaf. This tradition is continued in *Maqtal al-Ḥusayn* by al-Khwārazmī. Here he generally uses Ibn A'tham's account and provides interpretations, explanations, and supplements.

In his account of al-Ḥusayn, Ṭabarī has relied heavily on Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 204/819–20). The latter has provided us with the most detailed version of Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774). By and large this seems to follow Abū Mikhnaf word for word and in the main is confirmed as authentic by the corroborating evidence of reports in other historians, particularly Balādhurī, which have come from Abū Mikhnaf through a different transmission. Ibn al-Kalbī has supplemented this with extracts from 'Awānah b. al-Ḥakam (d. 147/764). He also gives a few reports from the Shī'ite Jābir b. Yazīd al-Ju'fī (d. 128/746) and al-Qāsim, the son of the Shī'ite al-Aṣbagh b. Nubātah (d. 1st/7th century).

The second source used by Ṭabarī is the account purporting to be that of the fifth Shī'ite Imām Abū Ja'far Muḥammad al-

Bāqir (114/732) b. 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn by the Shī'ite 'Ammār b. Mu'āwiyah al-Duhnī (d. 133/750-1). This account is also the one used by Mas'ūdī with only minor differences. Clearly this is presented as the authentic view of Muḥammad al-Bāqir on the subject and therefore the view that ought to be accepted by the Shī'ah. In its outline, and it is brief, it is, with only slight variations, the same as Ibn al-Kalbī's version.

To these two accounts Ṭabarī adds a very brief summary from Abū al-Ḥudhayl Ḥusayn b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān and a few supplementary details from 'Umar b. Shabbah. The impression conveyed is that we have been presented with a definitive account of the event where all the evidence has been collated and presented. This impression is not altogether correct and it is appropriate in introducing Ṭabarī's version to examine it a little more closely. In order to do this, it is convenient to divide the account into the following sections:

1. The attempt to confirm Yazīd's caliphate by making important figures among the Muslims give him the oath of allegiance.
2. The letters from Kūfah to al-Ḥusayn, the appointment of Ibn Ziyād as governor of Kūfah, and the abortive mission of Muslim b. 'Aqil.
3. Al-Ḥusayn's journey to Karbalā', his negotiations with 'Umar b. Sa'd, and his death.
4. The desecration of the head of al-Ḥusayn, and the treatment of the survivors from his family.

All the sources are agreed that at his succession Yazīd was anxious to obtain the oath of allegiance from al-Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr, and many also include Ibn 'Umar. Dinawarī adds 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr but this is clearly wrong as the latter was already dead. It is evident to all that these are leading Muslims, the sons of famous fathers, and therefore we are left with the impression in Ṭabarī's account that it was only natural that Yazīd should want them to pledge allegiance to him. There may, however, have been a little more to it than that. According to both Balādhurī and Ibn A'tham, Mu'āwiyah had agreed, in the treaty he made with al-Ḥasan b. 'Alī on the latter's abdication, that there should be a consultative council (*shūrā*) to decide the suc-

cession after him. However, Ṭabarī fails to mention this. The *shūrā* was the institution introduced by 'Umar for his succession, the six leading Muslims chose one of their number as the Caliph. Therefore al-Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn 'Umar could naturally have expected to have been among the group who decided on the next Caliph, and almost certainly that group would not have chosen Yazīd. What Yazīd was doing—and his father seems to have tried to do the same toward the end of his life—was trying to preempt the *shūrā* by obtaining these men's oaths of allegiance.

In presenting al-Ḥusayn's and Ibn al-Zubayr's reaction, either Ṭabarī or Ibn al-Kalbī has amalgamated two reports from Abū Mikhnaḥ. In the second half of the first report, the part omitted by Ṭabarī or Ibn al-Kalbī, both men have made excuses to avoid seeing al-Walīd, the governor of Medina, when he asked them to come. Guessing the reason why he has asked them, they make their escape to Mecca. The second report from Abū Mikhnaḥ, which in Ṭabarī's version has been tacked on to the beginning of the first report, deals with the conversation between al-Ḥusayn and al-Walīd. Ṭabarī completely ignores reports included by both Balādhurī and Khalīfah b. Khayyāt from the Baṣran historian Juwayriyyah b. Asmā' (d. 173/789) in which both Ibn al-Zubayr and al-Ḥusayn meet al-Walīd together and Ibn al-Zubayr is the main spokesman. The selective picture that emerges from Ṭabarī's version favors al-Ḥusayn at the expense of Ibn al-Zubayr.

All the sources are agreed upon the Kūfāns' sending to al-Ḥusayn to come to them as their leader. All, too, are agreed on the mission of Muslim b. 'Aqīl to find out the situation in Kūfah. Yazīd's remedy for that situation is the appointment of 'Ubaydallāh. For this Ibn al-Kalbī's account, or Ṭabarī's version of it, leaves the main source, Abū Mikhnaḥ, and adopts the account of 'Awānah b. al-Ḥakam. In this account, Yazīd's appointment of 'Ubaydallāh is as the result of advice from his Christian adviser Sarjūn, who presents it as Mu'āwīyah's advice. Clearly the appointment of 'Ubaydallāh is being laid at the door of the Christian Sarjūn and blame for what ensues is in some way removed from Yazīd. Surprisingly, the apparent Shī'ite account from Muḥammad al-Bāqir supports this report of the appointment of 'Ubaydallāh. However, since it gives this in greater detail than many of the events that one would expect someone sympathetic to al-Ḥusayn to dwell

on, that account begins to look suspect in terms of its apparent origin. It is 'Awānah, too, who reports the three choices given by Yazīd of dealing with Muslim b. 'Aqīl: (a) the first to imprison him, (b) the second to kill him, (c) and the third to banish him. The fact that 'Ubaydallāh chooses to kill him again in some way diminishes the responsibility of Yazīd for that action.

The Baṣran historian Wahb b. Jarīr (d. 207/822) has Muslim, before he is killed, declare at the behest of 'Ubaydallāh that he is a leader of rebels, in this way detracting from any heroism Muslim may have shown. This historical report is completely ignored by Ṭabarī.

Abū Mikhnaḥ's account, as reported by Ṭabarī, of al-Ḥusayn's journey to Kūfah provides us with the most detailed account with important speeches and letters by al-Ḥusayn. The significance of these is that al-Ḥusayn in them makes the kind of claims about himself and the Imāmate that are clearly of a Shī'ite character. This indicates that there was a Shī'ite version of the events prior to Abū Mikhnaḥ that Abū Mikhnaḥ has incorporated into his own account along with other reports.

In the historical presentation of the account, the next major issue is the responsibility for al-Ḥusayn's death. According to Abū Mikhnaḥ, the consensus of historians at this time was that al-Ḥusayn had offered 'Umar b. Sa'd, 'Ubaydallāh's commander of his forces against al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā', three options: (a) he would go back, (b) he would go to a frontier post, or (c) he would go to Yazīd and put his hand in his and see what his view was. If these were really offered, then 'Ubaydallāh's task was over. All he had to do was send al-Ḥusayn to Yazīd. However, 'Ubaydallāh insisted that al-Ḥusayn must submit to him, this was too much for al-Ḥusayn. He, his followers, and his family accepted death. The blame for al-Ḥusayn's death according to this is clearly the responsibility of 'Ubaydallāh, and not Yazīd. The purpose of this version originally may have been merely intended to transfer the blame for al-Ḥusayn's death from Yazīd to 'Ubaydallāh. However, it also had implications for those who believed in the Imāmate of al-Ḥusayn, for he was, in fact, agreeing to accept Yazīd as Caliph; he was willing to renounce his whole mission, which was the rejection of Yazīd's caliphate. Abū Mikhnaḥ admits that there is a tradition that maintains that all al-Ḥusayn offered was to go back

to Medina or go anywhere else in God's broad land. Despite this view, which would agree with the Shī'ite version, we have the Shī'ite Imām Muḥammad al-Bāqir endorsing again the attitude that does not agree with the views of the Shī'ah.

The treatment of al-Ḥusayn's head after his death is another example of the division of opinion concerning who is more blameworthy, Yazid or 'Ubaydallāh. Abū Mikhnaḥ himself has reports for both Yazid and 'Ubaydallāh, poking at the teeth in al-Ḥusayn's head. In 'Awānah's version, when the surviving prisoners are sent to Yazid, he treats them well and declares that if he had been there he would never have killed al-Ḥusayn. From the extracts we have from 'Awānah's account, it seems that he is transferring all the blame he can from Yazid to 'Ubaydallāh. Abū Mikhnaḥ provides us with a variety of versions, very few of which seem to have been edited in the same way in which the account about the oath of allegiance was edited. However, Ṭabarī has contrived to make the account of Muḥammad al-Bāqir the arbiter over such conflicts and in it the action is Yazid's.

Despite these comments on Ṭabarī's version of the death of al-Ḥusayn, we owe to him the fact that we have the most detailed version of the narrative available to us in his report of Ibn al-Kalbī's recension of Abū Mikhnaḥ's work. The space given to this event, which in terms of political history was a failed revolution, emphasizes the importance of the event for Muslims in general, and the Shī'ah in particular. The death or martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn was for a long time a problem for the consciences of devout Muslims. He was, after all, the grandson of the Prophet. For the Shī'ah its significance is much deeper. Al-Ḥusayn serves in their eyes as a redemptive hero, who by his actions set an example to Muslims that should always be remembered.

After the death of al-Ḥusayn, Ṭabarī deals with the opposition to Yazid by Ibn al-Zubayr. In fact, he introduces an account of the beginnings of that opposition that is clearly out of place. During his description of the events of the year 60/680, he gives an account of the attack by Ibn al-Zubayr's brother, 'Amr b. al-Zubayr, on Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca. If this had been the case, it would have taken place either before al-Ḥusayn had departed or immediately afterward. That it is out of place is corroborated by

Balādhuri, who also has the incident, and puts it correctly after al-Ḥusayn's death. The account of this given by Ṭabarī is based entirely on Wāqidi. The general tenor of Ṭabarī's account of this incident is borne out by Balādhuri, who gives a much wider range of sources, including Wāqidi.

The accounts given of Yazīd's attempts to persuade Ibn al-Zubayr and the people of Medina and Mecca to accept his authority are again confirmed by much fuller accounts from Balādhuri. The same is the case for the battle of Ḥarrah and the bombardment of the Ka'bah. There is the same tendency in the sources to try to mitigate the responsibility of Yazīd for these crimes against Islam by thrusting the blame on his generals, in this case, Muslim b. 'Uqbah and Ḥusayn b. Numayr al-Sakūnī.

One constitutional problem does emerge from Ṭabarī's treatment of his sources. This is the problem concerning the condition on which Ibn al-Zubayr was receiving the oath of allegiance. In Balādhuri it is quite clear that Ibn al-Zubayr at this juncture is receiving the oath of allegiance on the condition that there will be a *shūrā*. Ṭabarī never mentions this. On one occasion in a report that is identical with one given by Balādhuri, he deliberately omits the words "on the condition of a *shūrā*" from the statement that Ibn al-Zubayr was receiving the oath of allegiance from the people. In fact *shūrā* is only mentioned once and then, perhaps, by accident when he reports that the people of Mecca held the view that a *shūrā* was appropriate.

An answer to why this omission took place has yet to be given.

In the Arabic texts the names Ḥusayn and Ḥusayn have been given sometimes with the article *al-* and sometimes without it. In general for al-Ḥusayn, it is more usual that the *al-* occurs. In some accounts the *al-* is clearly missing for derogatory reasons, but in others this is not so. I have in fact followed the Arabic, and where there is al-Ḥusayn I have written it and, where not, I have omitted it. In citations from the Qur'ān, where two different numbers are given for a verse, the first is that of the official Egyptian edition and the second that of Flügel's text.

I would like to thank my former colleagues Dr. 'Abd al-Raḥīm 'Alī and Dr. Farid al-Shayyāl for help in checking the translation. I owe thanks, too, to Dr. Carole Hillenbrand for help and advice. I

must also thank Mrs. May O'Donnell and Miss Irene Crawford for their help in typing a difficult manuscript. However, any imperfections in the translation are my responsibility.

I. K. A. Howard

The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority
and the Coming of the Marwānids
Volume XX
Translated by G. R. Hawting

This volume covers the vital early years of the second Muslim civil war, when the Umayyad caliphate seemed on the point of extinction. That it survived had much to do with the vigor of the Umayyad Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, whose initial restoration of Umayyad authority is described here in some detail by al-Ṭabarī's sources. In the chaos and confusion of the civil war, however, developments took place that were to prove significant for the future of the Umayyad caliphate, indeed for the early history of Islam in general. Among them, the first manifestations of large-scale tribal divisions among the Arabs, together with the development of support for the descendants of the Prophet as the only legitimate rulers, were particularly important and receive special attention. For this period, al-Ṭabarī's *History* is a fundamental source.

The material collected by al-Ṭabarī frequently makes lively and colorful reading, and the annotations that accompany this translation attempt to clarify and make more explicit the sometimes allusive and compressed information provided by al-Ṭabarī and his sources. Since the standard edition of the text was made, at the end of the nineteenth century, a significant number of other sources have been published, which often make possible a more exact reading of al-Ṭabarī's text. For these reasons, it is hoped that this translation will appeal to those interested in the period but who have little or no Arabic and will also prove useful to students and scholars who are capable of reading the Arabic but will appreciate the suggested textual amendments and improvements and the elucidatory comments.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XX

*The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority
and the Coming of the Marwānids*

**THE CALIPHATES OF MUʿĀWIYAH II AND
MARWĀN I AND THE BEGINNING OF
THE CALIPHATE OF ʿABD AL-MALIK**

A.D. 683-685/A.H. 64-66



The History of Al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME XX

**The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority
and the Coming of the Marwānids**

translated and annotated
by

G.R. Hawting

School of Oriental and African Studies,
University of London

State University of New York Press

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Abbreviations

Add. et emend.: List of *addenda et emendanda* included in the final volume of the Leiden edition of the text of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ*.

Ar.: Arabic.

Cairo: The edition of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ* by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, 10 vols., Cairo, 1960-1969.

El¹: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, first edition.

El²: *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition.

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, Leiden, 1967.

Gloss.: Glossary included in the final volume of the Leiden edition of the text of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'riḫ*.

JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.

JNES: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*.

LA: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab*, 15 vols., Beirut, 1955-.

RSO: *Rivista degli studi orientali*.

TA: Al-Zabidī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, 10 vols., Benghazi, n.d.

Ṭabarī: When followed by a reference, the Leiden edition of the Arabic text of the *Ta'riḫ*.

tr.: Translation.

ZA: *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie*.

ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*.

In citations from the Qur'ān the numbering is that of Flügel's text.

Translator's Foreword

1. The context of events described in this volume

This volume of the translation of al-Ṭabari's *History* covers the early years of what has come to be called the second civil war or the second *fitnah*. The background to the events described is the almost total collapse of Umayyad authority, even in the dynasty's heartland of Syria, following the death of Yazīd I and the short reign of his son Mu'āwiyah II, in 64 (683-84). In the vacuum which ensued, various political and religious groups attempted to seize leadership of the still emerging Arab-Muslim empire before, somewhat less than a decade later, the Umayyads were able to reimpose their caliphate over all the territories the Arabs had conquered. In addition to describing the events whereby the Umayyads, in the person of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, managed to restore their position in Syria and Egypt, this volume is chiefly concerned with three of the movements which contested power with the Umayyads during the second civil war.

ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr, associating himself closely with the sanctuary at Mecca, was recognized as caliph by many throughout the lands ruled by the Arabs. It is the gradual elimination by the Umayyads of his support and, finally, of Ibn al-Zubayr himself, which provides the main theme in the accounts of the second civil war. By the end of this volume, the Umayyads have, in effect, brought to an end Zubayrid ambitions in Syria and Egypt: in Syria as a consequence of the victory, in 64 (684) at the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ, of the pro-Umayyad Quḍāʿī tribal confederation over the pro-Zubayrid Qaysīs, and in Egypt as a result of expeditions sent there by the Umayyad

Marwān once his position in Syria was secured. In Iraq, Mesopotamia and the east, however, the Zubayrids remain dominant.

In Iraq, the Zubayrid dominance was threatened more by the emergence of movements claiming that religious and political leadership belonged by right to the Prophet Muḥammad's descendants through his cousin and son-in-law 'Alī, than by any Umayyad revival. Generally, these movements are referred to as Shi'ite. In the present volume the history of two of these movements is described. First, there is that of the Penitents (the Tawwābūn), so called, it is said, because of the need they felt to repent their failure to help 'Alī's son al-Ḥusayn when he made a bid for power in 61 (680) at the battle of Karbalā'. The rise of this group in the Iraqi garrison town of al-Kūfah until its virtual annihilation at the hands of an Umayyad army in Mesopotamia is described here in some detail. Second, there is the development of the movement, again in al-Kūfah, led by Mukhtār, claiming to act on behalf of another son of 'Alī, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah. This volume of translation ends with the account of how Mukhtār and his followers seized the town and drove out the Zubayrid governor.

The third movement challenging the Umayyads and the other parties involved in the civil war is given the general name of Khārijite. At this period the movement, which is characterized by its stress on righteousness, rather than genealogy, as the only necessary precondition for the leader of the community, was strong among certain of the Arab tribes in Mesopotamia and Iraq. In the volume here we are told that the Khārijites at first united with Ibn al-Zubayr in his defense of the sanctuary against the Umayyads but then, as a result of religious and ideological divisions, broke with him and split into a number of subgroups. One of these, the Azāriqah, then raised a revolt in Iraq, and we are given a description of its vicissitudes before suppression by al-Muhallab on behalf of the Zubayrids.

Together with the accounts of these rival movements for power, the volume contains detailed accounts of the confused situation in two important provinces as a result of the power

vacuum which followed the temporary collapse of Umayyad authority, sc. Iraq and Khurāsān. For Iraq, there is an account of the unsuccessful attempt to maintain his position by the former governor on behalf of the Umayyads, ʿUbaydallāh b. Ziyād, of the effect this had on tribal divisions, and then of the recognition of Zubayrid authority in the province. For Khurāsān, there is an account of the troubles there associated with ʿAbdallāh b. Khāzim's imposition of his own authority over the province. Again, we are told, these troubles had important consequences for the development of tribal factionalism among the Arabs.

The volume opens in the middle of an attack by an Umayyad army on Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca. The army had been sent by the caliph Yazīd I b. Muʿāwiyah with the double objective of subduing Medina, where a number of leading men had declared their rejection of Yazīd as caliph, and putting an end to the refusal of Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca to accept Yazīd's caliphate. Previously, we have been informed that Ibn al-Zubayr's refusal to accept Yazīd went back even to the lifetime of Muʿāwiyah I, who had attempted to secure the succession of his son while he himself was still alive. On the death of Muʿāwiyah I, Ibn al-Zubayr had fled from Medina to Mecca to escape the attempts of Yazīd's governor to force him to declare his acceptance of Yazīd's caliphate. At first, Ibn al-Zubayr had not put himself forward as a candidate for the caliphate, but merely refused to recognize Yazīd.

Yazīd had then raised an army in Syria and sent it to the Hijāz under the command of Muslim b. ʿUqbah al-Murri. After capturing Medina following the battle on the Harrah, Muslim had set out for Mecca, but died en route, and his position as leader of the army was taken by al-Ḥuṣayn b. Numayr al-Sakūnī. The latter had laid siege to Mecca and begun a bombardment with catapults, and in the course of the siege the sanctuary in Mecca, the Kaʿbah, had been damaged by fire. Before the siege could be brought to a successful conclusion, however, news arrived of the death of the caliph in Syria, whereupon the besiegers entered into negotiations with Ibn al-Zubayr. The first section of this volume tells us of the outcome of these negotiations and of subsequent developments.

II. Tribes, clans, families, etc.

Prominent in many of the episodes recounted here are tribal divisions among the Arabs. During the second civil war these divisions really became important for the first time—in Syria in the events associated with the battle of Marj Rāhiṭ, in Iraq in connection with ʿUbaydallāh b. Ziyād's attempt to maintain his authority, and in Khurāsān with Ibn Khāzim's *fitnah*. The emergence of large-scale and widespread tribal alliances and feuds among the Arabs in lands they had conquered is undoubtedly to be explained by reference to events in the period before the second civil war: migrations and tribal settlements which led to competition for land and resources, and the tendency of caliphs and governors to form links with particular groups among the Arabs thereby fueling the resentment of others. With the breakdown of Umayyad authority and the emergence of different contenders for power in the second civil war, the tensions and pressures which had been created now came to the surface.

The multiplicity and diversity of tribal names, and the relationship between them, can pose a problem for non-specialists. In the notes to the translation I have generally tried to identify the family or tribal affiliations of individuals and have frequently referred to Caskel and Strenziok's systematization of the work on the genealogy of the Arabs by the Muslim scholar Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (d. 206(821)). But the nonspecialist may still find the names puzzling, and it may be useful, therefore, to attempt here a simplified account of the genealogy of the Arabs as elaborated by Muslim scholars, in the hope that the reader will be able to relate the more detailed information in the text and notes to this simplified scheme.

It is important to remember that complete agreement was never reached among the genealogists and that doubts and differences of opinion about the position in the scheme of this or that group persisted. Furthermore, the scheme as we know it was elaborated in Islamic times by Muslim scholars, and we cannot be sure how far it reflects the ideas of the Arab nomads themselves or how relevant it is to the situation of the Arabs before Islam. Finally, the scheme is presented as

a genealogy, but it seems likely that this was a fiction which embodied the reality of alliances for political and other reasons, and there is clear evidence that at the time of the second civil war the genealogical position of important groups, notably the Quḏā'ah in Syria, was changed in order to accommodate political and military realities.

The genealogists, then, distinguished two main descent groups among the Arab peoples, that is, the peoples who first developed the Arabic language in the Arabian peninsula and its geographical extension northward into the Syrian Desert. One group, regarded as the original inhabitants of Arabia, is said to be descended from a certain Qaḥṭān, perhaps to be identified with the Biblical Joktan (Gen. 10: 25-26). These may be conveniently referred to as "southerners" since they are said to have come from the southern regions of Arabia. Sometimes they are called Yemenīs. The other main group, the "northerners," is said to be descended from Ismā'īl (biblical Ishmael), the son of Ibrāhīm (Abraham), who, according to Muslim tradition, came to live in Arabia at a time when the "southerners" were already established there. These "northerners" are commonly called Nizār, after one of their ancestors, sometimes Ma'add, after another.

In this volume, several groups among the "southerners" are particularly prominent. In al-Baṣrah and Khurāsān, the Azd play an increasingly important role. They were relative late-comers to al-Baṣrah, whence many migrated to Khurāsān. Their rise in Khurāsān was closely associated with the career of al-Muhallab, himself an Azdī, and his family. In al-Kūfah, especially in connection with Mukhtār's revolt, Hamdān and Kindah seem to be the two most frequently mentioned southern tribal groups. In Syria, the Quḏā'ah, under the leadership of the tribe of Kalb, were the chief supporters of the Umayyads following the death of Mu'āwiyah II, the Umayyads having established marriage ties with the Kalb in the time of Mu'āwiyah I and Yazīd I.

The "northerners" present a rather more complicated picture. They are subdivided into the two main groups of Muḏar and Rabī'ah. In Iraq and the east Tamīm is the most prominent group among the Muḏar, while in Syria it is Qays.

The tribe of Quraysh, to which the Prophet Muḥammad belonged, was also part of Muḍar. Quraysh also numbered among its members the Hāshimid, Umayyad and Zubayrid families, as well as several other prominent families and individuals. The main group of Rabī'ah about whom we read in this volume is Bakr b. Wā'il, established in Iraq and Khurāsān. Despite their common Nizārī descent, Tamīm and Bakr came to be hostile to each other and the Bakr (and other parts of Rabī'ah) formed an alliance with the Yemenī Azd against Tamīm (and other Muḍarī groups).

When a man's tribal origin is indicated by his *nisbah* (the part of his name which usually end in a long -ī), it is sometimes easy to place because it refers to one of the main groups already mentioned (al-Bakrī, al-Tamīmī, al-Qurashī, etc.), but more usually the *nisbah* refers to a family or clan within the wider group. For example, a man of Bakr might more commonly be called al-Sadūsī or al-Yashkurī or by a name derived from any of the many smaller groups which went to make up the Banū (i.e., the tribe of) Bakr, rather than simply al-Bakrī. In such cases, it is obviously important to relate the sub-group to the larger group of which it is a part, and it is hoped that the information provided in the footnotes here facilitates that task.

III. *Al-Ṭabarī's sources in this volume*

Al-Ṭabarī composed his work by selecting from and piecing together the reports of a number of earlier authorities. Indeed, much of his importance lies in the number of authorities which he quoted and which would now largely be lost to us if it were not for al-Ṭabarī's works: not only his *History* but also his voluminous Qur'ān commentary and other works. In the present volume, he draws upon a number of different sources, depending upon the area with which his work is concerned at any particular point. The bulk of his information is derived from two intermediaries, sc. 'Umar b. Shabbah and Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī. The former, whose information mainly relates to events in al-Baṣrah and its dependency Khurāsān, transmits extracts from a variety of earlier sources,

notably Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī. Ibn al-Kalbī, relevant mainly for events in al-Kūfah and to some extent those in Syria, transmits materials from two important earlier authorities, ʿAwānah b. al-Ḥakam al-Kalbī and Abū Mikhnaḥ. In addition, al-Ṭabarī has material from Abū ʿUbaydah, al-Wāqidī, al-Haytham b. ʿAdī and other important earlier collectors and systematizers of historical tradition whose works have not come down to us.

The way in which the chain of transmitters (the *isnād*) for a particular report is set out is not always consistent: sometimes it is given complete, sometimes only parts of it are given, it being assumed that the reader understands this. I have sometimes, in the interests of clarity, inserted information in the *isnād*, usually signaled by parentheses. Ultimately, the material is usually traced back to eyewitnesses and participants in the events, many of whom cannot be otherwise identified. Brief information about the more important transmitters, together with references to works giving more information, is usually given in the note accompanying the first reference to the authority concerned.

The question of the authenticity of the reports given by al-Ṭabarī, of their value for reconstructing the events of which they purport to be a record, is too complicated to go into here. Suffice it to say that modern scholarship has drawn attention to the bias which inevitably affects the Muslim tradition at all stages of its collection and systematization, and to the literary stereotypes and *topoi* which it contains. Among many important analyses of the sources and methods of Muslim historians like al-Ṭabarī, his predecessors and contemporaries, particularly worthy of mention seem to me to be those by J. Wellhausen in his "*Prolegomena zur ältesten Geschichte des Islams*," in the introduction to his *Arab Kingdom*, and in his *Religio-Political Factions* (see the Bibliography at the end of this volume for full details); by Albrecht Noth in his *Quellenkritische Studien*; and more radically and succinctly, by Patricia Crone in the "*Historiographical Introduction*" to her *Slaves on Horses*.

IV. Principles of translation and acknowledgments

In general, I have attempted to translate on the basis of the printed Leiden text except where a comparison with other texts shows that the Leiden text needs to be modified. In such cases I have drawn attention to the alteration in a footnote. It has not proved possible for me to take into account any new manuscript material, but, even using the printed material which has become available since the Leiden edition was made, notably volumes IVb and V of al-Balādhuri's *Ansāb al-ashraf*, I have been able to make what I think are a significant number of improvements to the Leiden text.

It should be noted, however, that appended to the Leiden text was a substantial list of *Addenda et emendanda*, which are frequently overlooked. Most of them were incorporated in the Cairo edition of al-Ṭabarī's *History*, and, at least for the part of the work translated here, virtually all of the occasions where the Cairo text differs from the Leiden can be explained by referring to the Leiden *Add. et emend.* It has seemed a good idea, therefore, to refer the reader to the *Add. et emend.* wherever my translation is based on it and consequently seems to depart from the printed text.

I have tried to translate Arabic technical terms as far as possible, but sometimes have judged it preferable to leave words or phrases in Arabic, with a footnote accompanying their first occurrence. Sometimes I have offered a simple translation but have alerted the reader to a possible problem by supplying the Arabic in parentheses.

I have become increasingly aware of the problems involved in translating a text which is relatively distant from us in time and culture; even apparently simple sentences acquire new complexities the more one looks at them. I have been helped considerably by a number of people who may not always have been aware of what they were doing when responding off the cuff to apparently random questions. In particular, I am grateful to my colleague at SOAS, Dr. A.A.M. Shereef, who has read the whole translation and offered innumerable valuable comments, and to Dr. Albert Arazi of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, whose expertise in classical Arabic poetry saved me from several crass errors.

Volume XXI
Translated and Annotated
by Michael Fishbein

Volume XXI of the History of al-Ṭabarī (from the second part of 66/685 to 73/693) covers the resolution of "the Second Civil War." This conflict, which had broken out in 64/683 after the death of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd I, involved the rival claims of the Umayyads (centered in Syria) and the Zubayrids (centered in the Hijāz), each of whom claimed the caliphal title, Commander of the Faithful. Both parties contended for control of Iraq, which was also the setting for al-Mukhtār's Shi'ite uprising in al-Kufāh during 66/685 and 67/686. Kharijite groups were active in south-western Iran and central Arabia, even threatening the heavily settled lands of Iraq. By the end of 73/692, the Umayyad regime in Damascus, led by 'Abd-al-Malik, had extinguished the rival caliphate of Ibn al-Zubayr and had reestablished a single, more or less universally acknowledged political authority for the Islamic community.

Al-Ṭabarī's account of these years is drawn from such earlier historians as Abū Mikhnaḥ, al-Madā'inī, and al-Wāqidī and includes eyewitness accounts, quotations from poems, and texts of sermons. Notable episodes include al-Mukhtār's slaying of those who had been involved in the death of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā', the death of al-Mukhtār at the hands of Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr, the revolt of 'Amr b. Sa'id in Damascus, the death of Muṣ'ab at the Battle of Dayr al-Jāthaliq, and al-Ḥajjāj's siege and conquest of Mecca on behalf of 'Abd-al-Malik. There are excursuses on the chair that al-Mukhtār venerated as a relic of 'Alī, the biography of the colorful brigand 'Ubaydallāh b. al-Ḥurr, and the development of the secretarial office in Islam.

The translation has been fully annotated. Parallels in the works of Ibn Sa'd, al-Balādhurī, and the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* have been indicated in the notes where these accounts supplement or diverge from that of al-Ṭabarī.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXI

The Victory of the Marwānids

A.D. 685–693 / A.H. 66–73



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXI

**The Victory of
the Marwānids**

translated and annotated
by

Michael Fishbein

University of California, Los Angeles

State University of New York Press

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear in the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According

to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

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The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies

EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 1st edition. Leiden: 1913–1934

EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. 2nd edition. Leiden: 1960–

JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies

ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft



Translator's Foreword



Volume XXI of the History of al-Ṭabarī spans a period extending from the year 66 (685/686) to the year 73 (692/693), corresponding to series II, pages 642–854 of the Leiden edition. The events chronicled in the volume cover the resolution of what historians have come to call the Second Civil War and the reestablishment of Umayyad hegemony over the Islamic world. In the course of the period, the major anti-Umayyad forces—the Shi'ites of Iraq and the rival caliphate of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr in Mecca—collapsed, leaving 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, in the year 73, as ruler over a dynastic kingdom similar in extent to the one Mu'āwiyah had governed from Damascus before the dissolution of Umayyad authority following the death of Yazīd.

To understand the complex events of the years A.H. 66–73, one must go back to the crisis of the Umayyad caliphate after the death of Yazīd b. Mu'āwiyah in 64/683. Having earned the implacable hatred of the Shi'ah by causing the death of al-Ḥusayn and the hatred of influential elements in the Ḥijāz by his use of force to compel Mecca and Medina to acknowledge his rule, Yazīd bequeathed his caliphate to a thirteen-year-old boy, Mu'āwiyah, who survived his father by only forty days. Yazīd's two other surviving sons, even younger, obviously could not rule; the people of al-Kūfah and al-Baṣrah expelled their Umayyad governor, ending Umayyad authority in Iraq; the Ḥijāz was under the control of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr; and Syria itself was rent by tribal factionalism. The situation seemed so bad that the senior

member of the Umayyad family, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, was ready to acknowledge the authority of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr. Only the vigorous intervention of 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, the Umayyad governor of Iraq, seems to have instilled new confidence into the Umayyad family. Under the leadership of Marwān, who was succeeded as head of the family the following year by his son, 'Abd al-Malik, the Umayyads began the process that would end in 73/692 with the reestablishment of a single central authority, which, if not universally acknowledged, was accepted by the consensus of the Islamic community, and which had no obvious rival in the conduct of the affairs of the Islamic state.

Roughly, the process involved three steps. The hostility of pro-Zubayrid Arab groups in Syria had to be overcome; Iraq, itself a battleground between Zubayrid and Shī'i loyalties, had to be brought within the Umayyad orbit; and finally 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr himself had to be overcome in the Hījāz. By 66/685, Syrian opposition to Umayyad rule, while by no means eliminated, was well on its way to elimination. The surviving text of al-Ṭabarī gives little detail about the final collapse of pro-Zubayrid forces in Syria and al-Jazīrah; more can be gleaned from al-Balādhurī, or from the much later Ibn al-Athīr. In Iraq, the Umayyads were aided by a situation in which their opponents weakened each other. In Rabi' I 66 (October 685), al-Mukhtār b. Abī 'Ubayd, formerly a supporter of Ibn al-Zubayr, but now leading the Kūfan Shī'ah, led an uprising that forced Ibn al-Zubayr's governor to leave al-Kūfah and retreat to al-Baṣrah. In keeping with the Shī'i nature of the revolt, the *ashrāf* (tribal dignitaries) of al-Kūfah pledged allegiance to al-Mukhtār, not as "Commander of the Faithful," but as the "helper" (*wazīr*) of Muḥammad b. al-Ḥanafīyyah, a surviving son of 'Alī. Later in the year, the same *ashrāf* turned against al-Mukhtār and tried to expel him, but were defeated; many of them left for al-Baṣrah. Al-Mukhtār, who had come to power promising to avenge the death of al-Ḥusayn, lost no time in killing anyone he could capture who had been in any way connected with the death of al-Ḥusayn. Then he tried to expand his power. To the north, he was successful in two campaigns (both in 66), during the second of which the Umayyad commander 'Ubaydallāh b. Ziyād, the architect of the death of al-Ḥusayn, died in combat against Ibrāhīm b. al-Ashtar. To the south, al-Mukhtār's efforts to attract

support failed. Realizing how much was at stake, Ibn al-Zubayr sent his own brother, Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr, to govern al-Baṣrah and to deal with al-Mukhtār. Muṣ'ab defeated the forces of al-Mukhtār at the Battle of al-Madhār; al-Mukhtār retreated to al-Kūfah, was besieged, and died in combat in Ramaḍān 67 (April 687).

'Abd al-Malik now faced Ibn al-Zubayr. On each side, the years 68, 69, 70, and 71 presented certain internal threats to be overcome before there could be a final confrontation. Al-Ṭabarī's account of events in Syria is very brief for these years. The Damascus revolt of 'Amr b. Sa'īd al-Ashdaq in 69 or 70 is covered in some detail. The difficulties of the Zubayrids are presented rather fully. The Zubayrid governors of al-Baṣrah were continuously threatened by the Azāriqah, a Khārījite sect, who in 68/687 carried their depredations into the heartland of Iraq, and who drained off military resources that otherwise might have been used against the Umayyads. Also, there seems to have been widespread rural brigandage led by such figures as 'Ubaydallāh b. al-Ḥurr, whose picaresque biography appears under the year 68.

The decisive events that reestablished Umayyad primacy came in 71 (or 72) and 73. In each case, much was due to the Umayyad sense of politics—the ability to persuade potential opponents that more was to be gained by going over to the Umayyad side than by opposition, and that the stability and security of Iraq could best be served by an Umayyad victory. Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr's support melted under the sun of Umayyad promises to his erstwhile supporters; the treachery of many of Muṣ'ab's supporters at Dayr al-Jāthaliq in 71 (or 72) sealed his fate. 'Abd al-Malik was then free to deal, through his commander, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, with 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr.

Al-Ṭabarī's brief account of al-Ḥajjāj's siege of Mecca and the defeat and death of Ibn al-Zubayr in 73/692 (more external details of the battles are to be found in al-Balādhurī) centers on a portrait of the heroic death of Ibn al-Zubayr, whose brave, but hopeless, fight earned the admiration of even al-Ḥajjāj's second-in-command, who pronounced the following judgment: "Women have borne none manlier [than 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr]." 'Abd al-Malik, we are told, seconded the judgment.

Thus, 'Abd al-Malik was left in virtually uncontested posses-

sion of the title "Commander of the Faithful." (The Khārijites formed a significant exception to recognition of his claim.) More than settling the possession of a title, the end of the Second Civil War settled important questions about the nature of authority over the Muslim state. The Umayyads, in the person of 'Abd al-Malik, reestablished a caliphate based on a family dynasty and a strong military base in the Syrian Arab army. The principle of a single strong authority was reasserted over the various centrifugal forces at work among the Arabs. Had Ibn al-Zubayr prevailed, a much weaker caliphate would have been the result. However, the Umayyad triumph by no means put an end to alternative ideas about authority in Islam. Indeed, for the Shī'ah, the years of the Second Civil War witnessed the development of many tendencies that would bear fruit only much later. In particular, the revolt of al-Mukhtār, with its idea of an Imām living in retirement, his cause energetically furthered in political action by a "wazīr" or "helper," foreshadowed a constellation of ideas important for the genesis of the 'Abbāsid revolution. Furthermore, Khārijite ideas about the free election of a leader by the community certainly did not die out with the triumph of 'Abd al-Malik.

A Note on the Text

The translation follows the text of the Leiden edition, which appeared in installments between 1879 and 1898 under the overall editorship of M. J. De Goeje. The task of editing Part II, pages 580–1340 (A.H. 65–99), was assigned to the Italian scholar Ignazio Guidi. For establishing the text of the section here translated (II, 642–854), Guidi had five manuscripts at his disposal:¹

1. Constantinople, Köprülü 1047 (Siglum Co). This was a composite manuscript. The older portion, which Guidi singled out for special praise, was copied in A.D. the eleventh or perhaps the tenth century. It ended at

1. See ed. Leiden, *Introductio*, pp. LV–LXIII.

II, 706, and was followed by a section in a later hand, perhaps of the thirteenth century, much less carefully executed, and apparently from an original of a different family. This manuscript formed the based text for the edition.

2. Oxford, Bodleian, Uri 650 (Siglum O).²
3. Berlin, Petermann II, 635 (Siglum Pet). Beginning with II, 674, a fourth manuscript could be used:
4. Constantinople, Köprülü 1044 (Siglum C). Finally, from II, 789, a fifth manuscript was available:
5. Berlin, Ms. Or. Fol. 69 (Siglum B).³

Guidi divided these manuscripts into two families: an "older and much superior" family including Co (older hand), Pet, and C; and a more recent family including B, Co (younger hand), and O. (Ibn al-Athīr used a manuscript of this family.) Thus, throughout the section here translated, textual witnesses from two families were available.

To the five manuscripts used by Guidi, the 1960 Egyptian edition of Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm adds only one additional authority for establishing the text of the section here translated: Ms. Istanbul, Ahmet III, 2929. Its readings, occasionally preferable to any that were available to Guidi, are given in the notes of the Cairo edition; otherwise, the Cairo text is the same as the Leiden text, apart from differences of punctuation and vocalization.

For the events of these years, there are important parallel accounts in al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashraf*, Ibn Sa'd's *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kabīr*, al-Dīnawarī's *Kitāb al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, al-Iṣbahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, and Ibn A'tham al-Kūfī's *Kitāb al-Futūḥ*. The notes to the translation indicate some of these parallels, particularly when they involve interesting differences or further information, but the notes are not intended to provide an exhaustive listing of parallels.

The translator wishes to thank Professors Moshe Perlmann,

2. Described by M. J. De Goeje, *ZDMG* XVI, 759.

3. See Ahlwardt, *Berlin Catalogue*, IX, 36, n. 9419.

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Michael Fishbein

The Marwānid Restoration
Volume XXII
Translated by Everett K. Rowson

This volume chronicles the history of the Islamic state in the years A. H. 74-81 (A. D. 693-701), after the final defeat of Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca put an end to twelve years of civil war and reunited the empire under the rule of the Marwānid caliph ʿAbd al-Malik. Syria and the Hijaz enjoyed a period of relative peace during this time, and stability and consolidation were furthered by such basic administrative reforms as the institution of an official Islamic coinage. Pacification of Iraq, where Khārijite rebel bands still roamed and mutiny was spreading among the government forces, was entrusted by ʿAbd al-Malik to the victorious general al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf. Al-Ṭabarī gives a detailed account of this iron-fisted governor's administration, concentrating on his war against the redoubtable Shabīb b. Yazīd, a Khārijite guerilla leader with a band of a few hundred men who held out against all odds and twice even entered the capital at al-Kūfah and prayed in its mosque. Vivid eyewitness reports from participants on both sides of this conflict provide a valuable picture of Arab life in Iraq at this time, as well as evidence for the ideology of the Khārijites and the sources of discontent in the wider society.

Attention is also given to developments in the frontier provinces of the east, eventually also placed under the authority of al-Hajjāj. In Khurāsān, the vicious tribal feuds that had interrupted the policy of continued conquest were gradually resolved and campaigning resumed. In Sijistān, a crushing defeat of Arab troops led al-Hajjāj to outfit the "Peacock Army," a force of unprecedented size and impressiveness, which, when it rebelled under its leader, Ibn al-Ashʿath, was to offer the governor the gravest challenge of his career.

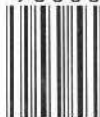
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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXII

The Marwānid Restoration

THE CALIPHATE OF 'ABD AL-MALIK

A.D. 693-701 / A.H. 74-81



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

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Abbreviations



Aghānī¹: Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī. *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. 20 vols. Būlāq, 1285 (1868).

BGA: Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum

EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed. Leiden, 1913–38.

EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. Leiden, 1960–.

EI² *Suppl.*: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., *Supplement*, Leiden, 1982–.

GAL: C. Brockelmann. *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, Leiden, 1937–49.

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Leiden, 1967–.

SEI: *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Leiden, 1953.

WKAS: *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*. Wiesbaden, 1970–.



Translator's Foreword



In this volume al-Ṭabarī chronicles the first nine years of the Marwānid restoration, the period following the final defeat and death of 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr in Mecca and the reunification of the Islamic polity under his opponent, the caliph 'Abd al-Malik. After twelve years of continuous civil war, this was a period of relative tranquillity, at least in the western provinces of the Hijaz, Syria, and Egypt. Concerning events in these areas al-Ṭabarī has little to say. Border warfare with the Byzantine Empire was resumed, but the annual summer campaigns produced few results, and we are given only the briefest mention of them. From other sources, we know of a series of fundamental administrative reforms implemented by the caliph at the capital in Damascus, but al-Ṭabarī reports only the most important of these: the institution of an official, aniconic, Islamic coinage. About such significant events as the building of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem he is totally silent. As in much of his *History*, al-Ṭabarī focuses his attention in this volume almost exclusively on Iraq and, to a lesser extent, the eastern provinces of Khurāsān and Sijistān; while this concentration can be explained in part by the nature of the source material available to him, it also reflects the continuing high level of conflict in these regions at this time, in contrast to the West.

In Iraq, despite the defeat of Ibn al-Zubayr's brother Muṣ'ab, there remained widespread disaffection with the Marwānid regime from several quarters, and Iraqi troops were still occupied with a war against the Azraqite Khārijites in Khūzistān and Fārs. A

forceful and effective governor was needed, and 'Abd al-Malik found him in the redoubtable al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf, whose appointment to Iraq immediately after his successful siege of Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca marked the beginning of an era. From his inaugural harangue to the Kūfāns immediately upon his arrival—perhaps the most celebrated speech in the history of Arabic literature—al-Ḥajjāj dominates this section of al-Ṭabarī's annals. After crushing a mutiny by the Baṣran forces, he prosecuted the Azraqite war with vigor, until dissension among the Azraqites themselves, perhaps between Arabs and non-Arabs, made possible their final and total defeat. Meanwhile, another group of Khārijites, small but pertinacious, harried Iraq itself, first under Šāliḥ b. Musarriḥ, then under Shabīb b. Yazīd. Al-Ṭabarī slows his narrative to give a full account of the saga of Shabīb, who, with only a few hundred men, roamed through Iraq with impunity, and even entered al-Kūfah twice. Every commander sent out against him was defeated or killed, as Shabīb pursued his guerrilla tactics, until al-Ḥajjāj finally turned the tide by himself taking the field and defeating him before al-Kūfah; as Shabīb's forces retreated, their leader was thrown by his horse from a bridge and drowned. Quoting participants from both sides of this conflict, al-Ṭabarī here offers, in reminiscence and anecdote, a vivid picture of life on campaign in Iraq at this time. Particularly interesting is his account of negotiations between Shabīb and the disaffected commander, Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīrah, who was induced to rebel against his governor and caliph but rejected Shabīb's own claim to legitimate rule; Muṭarrif's independent rebellion, a good indication of the degree of alienation from the central authority among the Iraqi forces, was quickly put down.

Farther east, in Khurāsān, the campaign of conquest had slowed and then stopped as tribal feuds and rivalries fractured the unity of the Arab troops and settlers. 'Abd al-Malik's appointment of a neutral governor from his own tribe of Quraysh stopped the fighting, but the wounds were slow to heal, and this volume begins and ends with accounts of the fates of Baḥīr and Bukayr, the leaders of the two factions of the divided Tamīm, the largest tribal group in Khurāsān. Al-Ḥajjāj's successes in Iraq led 'Abd al-Malik to add Khurāsān and Sijistān to his governorship, and al-Ḥajjāj sent out, as his sub-governor over Khurāsān, al-Muhallab b.

Abī Ṣufrah, the victorious general of the Azraqite war. Al-Muhallab was able to resume the Islamic campaigns, but without notable success.

Al-Ḥajjāj's sub-governor to Sijistān, 'Ubaydallāh b. Abī Bakrah, fared considerably worse. After penetrating far into enemy territory, his troops were surrounded and decimated. In response, al-Ḥajjāj raised and outfitted the "Peacock Army," on which he lavished great sums, and appointed 'Abd al-Rahmān b. al-Ash'ath to command it. This volume closes with the latter's modest successes in Sijistān—before his decision to rebel presented al-Ḥajjāj with the gravest challenge of his career.

In this section of his annals, al-Ṭabarī relies essentially on two authors. His account of events in Khurāsān is attributed throughout to al-Madā'inī (d. 225/839), while the much lengthier sections on Iraq depend almost exclusively on the monographs of Abū Mikhnaf (d. 157/774). Abū Mikhnaf is in fact al-Ṭabarī's sole acknowledged source for the Azraqite wars and the rebellion of Muṭarrif b. al-Mughīrah, as well as the disastrous expedition to Sijistān. Only in his account of Shabīb's attacks on al-Kūfah does al-Ṭabarī occasionally offer variant reports, from 'Umar b. Shabbah (d. 264/877) and an anonymous source. For al-Ḥajjāj's simultaneous appointment of governors to Khurāsān and Sijistān, al-Ṭabarī presents parallel accounts from both Abū Mikhnaf and al-Madā'inī. Other authorities are mentioned only occasionally. Al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823) is the source for al-Ṭabarī's very exiguous report on the coinage reform, Aḥmad b. Thābit is cited annually for the identity of the leader of the pilgrimage.

My translation follows the text of the Leiden edition by I. Guidi throughout, with only a very few emendations, required or suggested by context, and specified in the notes. Guidi's five (in one section six) manuscripts provide, on the whole, a satisfactory text, except for a number of abrupt transitions where the natural sequence seems disturbed. The philological commentary on al-Ḥajjāj's oration, for example, is interrupted by a narrative that probably should succeed it (II, 868); and the additions to Abū Mikhnaf's account of Shabīb's attacks on al-Kūfah, derived from other sources, seem in part to have been inserted in the wrong places, resulting in dangling transition sentences and perhaps some omitted *isnāds* (II, 910–919, 962–969). These problems

have been merely identified in the notes; their solution must await an eventual re-edition of the text.

I have provided relatively full citations of parallels to Al-Ṭabarī's information from available earlier sources, as well as from the *Kāmil* of Ibn al-Athīr, which is largely a summary of al-Ṭabarī and occasionally of textual importance. The most important of the early sources, specifically for the Khārijite wars, is the *Kitāb al-Futūḥ* of Ibn A'tham al-Kūfi, whose rather detailed account diverges considerably from that offered by al-Ṭabarī. Al-Mubarrad's *Kāmil* also includes a long digression on the Khārijites, which seems to share features with both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn A'tham. It is unfortunate that the section of al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb* on the reign of 'Abd al-Malik, another independent early source, remains unpublished and has been unavailable to me; I have, however, cited parallels from al-Balādhurī's section on al-Ḥajjāj, which appears in the volume of the *Ansāb* published by Ahlwardt under the title *Anonyme arabische Chronik*.

Besides making reasonable efforts to identify individuals and places mentioned in the text, I have regularly supplied information on tribal affiliations, relying most heavily on Caskel's analytical edition of Ibn al-Kalbī's *Jamharat al-nasab*. Al-Ṭabarī presents the conflicts in Khurāsān in this period as essentially tribal in nature and makes it clear that tribal solidarities and rivalries played an important role in the Khārijite disturbances in Iraq as well; while not attempting an original analysis of these tribal factors, I have thought it best to provide the basic information al-Ṭabarī would have assumed as general knowledge among his original readership.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Hans Hinrich Biesterfeldt and Professor Gerhard Endress of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum for facilitating my stay there and use of the library of the Seminar für Orientalistik, where much of the annotation was completed. I am also grateful to Professor Jacob Lassner of Wayne State University for his careful editing of my manuscript.

Everett K. Rowson

The Zenith
of the Marwānid House
Volume XXIII
Translated by Martin Hinds

This volume covers the years 700-715 A.D., a period that witnessed the last five years of the caliphate of the Umayyad 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and the whole of the caliphate of his son al-Walid. In retrospect, this period can be seen to have marked the apogee of Marwānid Umayyad power. It began with the dangerous revolt of the Iraqi tribal leader Ibn al-Ash'ath, which seriously imperilled Marwānid control of Iraq and was countered with considerable difficulty; but this proved to be the last of the obstacles faced by 'Abd al-Malik in the wake of the Second Civil War of 685-693. Thereafter he was able to preside over a strong and dynamic Arab kingdom, with al-Ḥajjāj b. Yusuf as his powerful governor of Iraq and the East.

When 'Abd al-Malik died in 705, the caliphate passed to his son al-Walid, during whose decade of office al-Ḥajjāj remained at his post and further Arab expansion took place in Central Asia, in Sind, and in the Iberian Peninsula. To many of their contemporaries, the Arabs of that time must have looked like potential world conquerors.

The volume ends shortly after the deaths of al-Ḥajjāj and al-Walid and just two years before the dispatch in 717 of the ill-fated Arab expedition to Constantinople.

SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies
Said Amir Arjomand, Editor



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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXIII

The Zenith of the Marwānīd House

THE LAST YEARS OF 'ABD AL-MALIK

AND

THE CALIPHATE OF AL-WALĪD

A.D. 700-715 / A.H. 81-96



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XXIII

The Zenith of the Marwānid House

translated and annotated
by

Martin Hinds

University of Cambridge

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually translated according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Translator's Foreword



The early years of the eighth century constitute what in retrospect can be seen as the high point of Marwānid Umayyad power. When, in 693, the prolonged war against the Zubayrids had finally come to an end, the Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān had been free to set about Umayyad consolidation; this took longest in Iraq, in a sequence of events culminating in the revolt led in 700-702 by the Iraqi *sharīf* 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. al-Ash'ath al-Kindī (with which this volume begins), which seriously imperiled Marwānid control of Iraq and was countered with considerable difficulty. Thereafter, however, 'Abd al-Malik presided over a strong and dynamic Arab kingdom, with al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafi as his powerful governor of Iraq and the East. When 'Abd al-Malik died in 705, the kingdom passed to his son al-Walīd, during whose ten-year caliphate al-Ḥajjāj remained at his post and further Arab expansion took place: in Central Asia, in Sind, and in the Iberian Peninsula. To many of their contemporaries, the Arabs of that time must have looked like potential world conquerors. The volume ends in 715, shortly after the deaths of al-Ḥajjāj and al-Walīd, and just two years before the dispatch of the ill-fated Arab expedition to Constantinople.¹

1. For general literature relating to this period, see J. Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall*, Calcutta 1927, pp. 232-57, 427-44; M. A. Shaban, *Islamic History A.D. 600-750 (A.H. 132): A New Interpretation*, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 110-26; H. Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, London and New York, 1986, pp. 100-4; G. R. Hawting, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate, A.D. 661-750*, London and Sydney, 1986, pp. 58-71.

In this volume, as is often the case in his chronicle, al-Ṭabarī's focus is on events in Iraq and the East, and he pays only fleeting attention to what was going on in Syria, Egypt, and the West; and it so happens that the central figure in the Arab history of this period was al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf. Both of the subjects receiving the most attention in this volume involved him: (1) the revolt of Ibn al-Ash'ath and how al-Ḥajjāj managed to deal with it;² and (2) events in Khurasan and Transoxania, notably the conquests effected by al-Ḥajjāj's protégé and governor of Khurasan, Qutaybah b. Muslim.³ In the case of the first of these subjects, much of what is relayed by al-Ṭabarī is also relayed by al-Balādhurī; in the case of the second, al-Ṭabarī is unquestionably the major source.

Ibn al-Ash'ath's revolt began in Sijistān and moved to Iraq; many grievances were involved, but the main reason why the revolt so nearly succeeded was that it brought together, on an unprecedented scale, highly disparate elements of Iraqi opposition to Syrian domination. The earlier Sufyānid Umayyad administration of Iraq had involved controlling the Iraqi Arab tribesmen through the local tribal *ashrāf*, and the Zubayrids tried similarly to involve them in the power structure (albeit with less success than the Sufyānids); on occasions when the established order in Iraq was exposed to any local threat or opposition, the *ashrāf* formally aligned themselves (or were required to align themselves) with the representatives of Umayyad/Zubayrid government there. It is therefore a telling comment on the state of affairs in Iraq under al-Ḥajjāj that the *sharīf* Ibn al-Ash'ath, supported by other *ashrāf*, led a revolt against the representative of Marwānid rule; it was a revolt that constituted a major departure from the earlier pattern of sharifian behavior and provided a leadership capable of uniting the various disgruntled Iraqi interest groups.

2. On this, see Wellhausen, *Kingdom*, pp. 232–50; C. E. Bosworth, *Sistān under the Arabs, from the Islamic Conquest to the Rise of the Saffārids* (30–250/651–864), Rome, 1968, pp. 55–63; *El²*, s.v. Ibn al-Ash'ath [L. Veccia Vaglieri]; 'A. 'A. Dixon, *The Umayyad Caliphate* (65–86/684–705): A Political Study, London, 1971, pp. 153–68; and, most recently, R. Sayed, *Die Revolte des Ibn al-Aš'at und die Koranleser: Ein Beitrag zur Religions- und Sozialgeschichte der frühen Umayyadenzeit*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1977.

3. See Wellhausen, *Kingdom*, pp. 427–44; H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, London, 1923, pp. 29–58; also *El²*, s.v. Qutayba b. Muslim [C. E. Bosworth].

Al-Ḥajjāj was able to counter it only by bringing in massive Syrian reinforcements for the Syrian troops already with him. Following the suppression of the revolt, the role of the Iraqi Arab tribesmen and their leaders was obviously to be diminished even more than it had been already, and al-Ṭabarī gives us detailed accounts of the stern measures then taken by al-Ḥajjāj in Iraq. In addition, he established Wāsiṭ (rather than making any more use of al-Baṣrah and/or al-Kūfah) as the base for his Syrian troops in Iraq. The Iraqi Arabs were for the time being well and truly subjugated to Syrian domination.

As for events in Khurasan and beyond, the period opens with Muhallabid governors of Khurasan, first al-Muhallab b. Abi Ṣufrah himself, then successively his sons Yazīd and al-Mufaḍḍal. Following the failure of Ibn al-Ash'ath's insurrection, the Muhallabids were the last Iraqi family of major importance, and al-Ḥajjāj soon succeeded in ousting them from Khurasan. Al-Ṭabarī goes on to regale us with the remarkable story of Mūsā b. 'Abdallāh b. Khāzim, the Sulamī who for fifteen years operated independently from his base at al-Tirmidh, before proceeding to the most important part of his account: the conquests effected in Central Asia by Qutaybah b. Muslim al-Bāhilī, al-Ḥajjāj's governor of Khurasan from 86 (705). Between that date and 96 (715), Qutaybah brought the whole of Lower Ṭukhāristān and Transoxania under Arab sway and made important inroads beyond the Jaxartes. Despite the fact that the account of the expedition to Kāshghar in 96 (715) seems to be an exaggeration (as Gibb has shown), it is nonetheless clear that Qutaybah achieved more in Central Asia than any other Arab conqueror of the Umayyad period; "with Ḥajjāj at his back, [he] held his conquests together, and when he disappeared there was neither leader nor organization to take his place."⁴ Al-Ṭabarī tells us a great deal about these important conquests, but he says almost nothing about the less important conquests in Sind effected at the same time by Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim al-Thaqafi,⁵ who was a relative of al-Ḥajjāj's and was directly responsible to him; one might have thought that the Ḥajjāj

4. Gibb, *Arab Conquests*, p. 54.

5. See F. Gabrieli, "Muḥammad ibn Qāsim and the Arab Conquest of Sind," *East and West*, N.S. 15 (1965), pp. 281-95.

connection would have led al-Ṭabarī to say more about these operations, but it is necessary in fact to turn to al-Balādhurī's *Futūḥ al-buldān* for details about them. More predictably, al-Ṭabarī also pays very little attention to the third instance of Arab expansion at this time, namely, the conquest of much of the Iberian Peninsula by Mūsā b. Nuṣayr and Ṭāriq b. Ziyād.⁶

Of the other matters touched on in this volume, something may be said, first, about Arab operations against the Byzantines. Here, as is apparent from the digest made by Brooks,⁷ al-Ṭabarī tells us more than any other single Arabic source; and it is clear that in general there was more activity on that front in the caliphate of al-Walid than in that of 'Abd al-Malik, which is scarcely surprising in view of 'Abd al-Malik's more pressing concerns. Even so, the sum of information available is depressingly meager, and numerous contradictions and problematic place names remain to be resolved.⁸

Secondly, there were two attempts during this period to divert succession to the caliphate. The first of these, when 'Abd al-Malik wished to divert it from his brother 'Abd al-'Azīz to his son al-Walid, was blocked by 'Abd al-'Azīz; the matter was resolved for 'Abd al-Malik when his brother predeceased him. The second, when al-Walid wished to divert the succession from his brother Sulaymān to his son 'Abd al-'Azīz, was blocked by Sulaymān, who outlived al-Walid and succeeded to the caliphate. As Hawting has remarked, "In view of the potentiality for conflict inherent in the lack of a fixed order of succession to the caliphate in the Umayyad period, it is remarkable how seldom real trouble developed from it."⁹

Thirdly, it can be noted, too, that during this period there emerged into prominence two figures who would subsequently play roles of major importance. 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān, a son of 'Abd al-Malik's brother mentioned in the preceding para-

6. E. Lévi-Provençal, *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, new ed., Leiden and Paris, 1950-53, vol. I, also *El²*, s.v. al-Andalus (E. Lévi-Provençal).

7. E. W. Brooks, "The Arabs in Asia Minor (641-750) from Arabic Sources," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 18 (1898), pp. 190-94.

8. See, most recently, R.-J. Lilie, *Die byzantinische Reaktion auf die Ausbreitung der Araber* (Miscellanea Byzantina Monacensia 22), Munich, 1976, pp. 113-22.

9. *First Dynasty of Islam*, p. 59.

graph, and later the Caliph 'Umar II, served as governor of Medina for six years under al-Walid, until the latter was persuaded by al-Ḥajjāj to dismiss him, and Khālid al-Qasrī, who was to become the governor of Iraq for most of the caliphate of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, served as governor of Mecca for perhaps as long as the last seven years of al-Walid's caliphate.¹⁰

This was above all what Shaban had styled "the age of Ḥajjāj,"¹¹ and particularly so in the caliphate of al-Walid, who, as Wellhausen has pointed out, "gave him a free hand, and even in his own sphere of government gave in to him and consulted his wishes."¹² This most unforgettable of Arab governors did more than any other individual to turn the period covered by the present volume into the pinnacle of the Marwānid achievement. Yet even he did not get his way in one important regard: in 90 (708–9), Yazīd b. al-Muhallab and other Muhallabids escaped from his custody in Iraq and gained the protection of the Caliph's brother, Sulaymān, in Palestine. Al-Ḥajjāj's attempts to put pressure on al-Walid to remedy the matter came to nothing. Six years later, Sulayman was caliph and the Muhallabids were in the ascendant.

There remains only the agreeable task of thanking those who have been kind enough to put their expertise at my disposal in the course of making and annotating this translation. Professor Iḥsān 'Abbās not only gave freely of his time to provide me with *fatwās* on all manner of queries that came up in the course of making the translation, but he also went through the penultimate draft and made further valuable suggestions. Professor Edmund Bosworth and Dr. Patricia Crone also went through the draft and made helpful comments and criticisms, for which I am grateful. All three scholars are of course to be absolved from any blame for such infelicities as may appear in the translation in its final form.

Martin Hinds

10. See *EI*², s.v. Khālid b. 'Abd Allāh al-Qasrī (G. R. Hawting), where the chronological difficulties relating to Khālid's governorship of Mecca are discussed.

11. *Islamic History*, ch. 6; see also *EI*², s.v. al-Ḥadjdjādī b. Yūsuf (A. Dietrich).

12. *Kingdom*, p. 251.

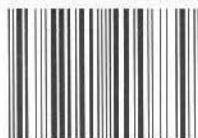
The Empire in Transition
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In this volume, which covers the caliphates of Sulaymān, ʿUmar II, and Yazīd II, al-Ṭabarī provides vivid and detailed accounts of the events spanning the period from 96-105/715-724. We listen to the stirring speeches of Qutaybah b. Muslim, in which he urges his followers to renounce their allegiance to Sulaymān; are present at the disastrous third and final attempt to take Constantinople; watch from behind the scenes as Rajāʾ b. Haywāh skillfully engineers the accession of ʿUmar II; and follow the remarkable career of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, first as governor and conqueror, then as prisoner, and finally as rebel.

Throughout this volume we observe the struggle of the Umayyad regime to maintain control over a rapidly expanding but increasingly dissatisfied subject population. Governors are appointed and dismissed with dizzying rapidity, administrative boundaries are drawn and redrawn, Arab tribesmen express dissatisfaction with the diminishing rewards of military conquest, non-Arab converts chafe at the differential treatment they receive, and religious opponents revolt in the name of "the Book and the Sunnah." Important in their own right, the events of this period provide an essential key to a proper understanding of the ʿAbbāsid revolution that lay just over the horizon.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXIV

The Empire in Transition

THE CALIPHATES OF SULAYMĀN, 'UMAR, AND YAZĪD

A.D. 715-724 / A.H. 97-105



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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME XXIV

The Empire in Transition

translated and annotated
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David Stephan Powers

Cornell University

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

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(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume 1.



Abbreviations



EI: The Encyclopaedia of Islām, first edition

EP²: The Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition

GAS: F. Sezgin, Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums. Leiden, 1967–

Translator's Foreword

During the ten-year period covered in this volume, the reins of Umayyad power were held by three caliphs bearing distinctive personalities: Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 96-99/715-717), a man with a reputation for luxurious living who is nevertheless favorably remembered for reversing the policies of al-Ḥajjāj and appointing 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz as his successor; the pious 'Umar (r. 99-101/717-720), a quasi-messianic figure whose accession to the caliphate, engineered by Rajā' b. Ḥaywah, constituted a virtual coup d'état; and Yazīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (r. 101-105/720-724), a profligate whose own demise was caused by his insoluble grief for his singing slave girl, Ḥabābah.

By the year 96/714-715, the Arab conquests had reached what ultimately would become their farthest limits in both the East and the West. With the exception of the disastrous third and final campaign against Constantinople, Sulaymān adopted a cautious policy that favored the consolidation of previous conquests over further expansion. This policy was taken to its logical extension by 'Umar II, who recalled Maslamah from the campaign against Constantinople, ordered a complete stop to every expedition on the eastern front, and called for a general withdrawal of the Arab soldiers from Transoxiana. Initially, this same cautious policy was continued by Yazīd II, whose governor over Khurāsān, Sa'īd b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, did not pass beyond Samarqand. On the two occasions on which he crossed over the Oxus River, he punished his own raiding parties, and was dubbed "Khudhaynah," "the little princess," by his own soldiers because of his perceived weakness. But the governorship of Khudhaynah's successor, Sa'īd al-Ḥarashī,

marked a return to a more aggressive policy that resulted in the brutal pacification of Soghdia and the subjugation of Kiss and Rabinjān.

Internally, the unity of the Umayyad Empire was threatened by several phenomena, the most important being the rise of tribal factionalism. Although scholars disagree over whether the terms "Qays" and "Yaman" refer to tribal confederations, political parties, or interest groups, it is generally accepted that the Qays stood for the expansion of the empire and the exclusion of non-Arab clients, while the Yaman criticized the policy of expansion and advocated equal status for Arab Muslims and non-Arab converts to Islam. The accession of Sulaymān, who had allied himself with the Yamanīs while serving as governor of Palestine, signaled a shift in the balance of power away from the Qaysīs, as the new Caliph proceeded to dismiss the Qaysī governors appointed by his predecessors, replacing them with men from the Yaman. In distant Farghānah, the Qaysī commander, Qutaybah b. Muslim al-Bāhili, realizing that his political usefulness had come to an end, tried to raise a revolt against the new Caliph, but his supporters, both Arab and non-Arab, turned against him, slew him, and returned to their homes. An effort to mollify tribal factionalism was made by 'Umar II, who chose governors over whom he had control and whom he believed to be competent, irrespective of their tribal affiliations. This policy was short-lived, however, as 'Umar reigned for only two years. Under his successor, Yazīd II, who sought to reestablish the old order, the Qaysīs returned to power, embittered by the humiliations they had suffered since the accession of Sulaymān; they were determined to take revenge. It was during the caliphate of Yazīd II, in the year 101/719–720, that Yazīd b. al-Muhallab al-Azdī staged his revolt, an episode to which Ṭabarī devotes considerable attention. Although this was not, strictly speaking, a tribal conflict—Ibn al-Muhallab's own tribe of the Azd sided against him—it nevertheless contributed to the intensification of the factional schism as Qaysīs were installed in Iraq and the East in its aftermath. More than any other factor, these tribal rivalries, which spanned the entire empire, contributed to the downfall of the Umayyads.

The administrative boundaries of Iraq and the eastern provinces shifted several times during the short span of ten years

covered in this volume. Previously, Khurāsān had been governed from the usual seat of the governor in Iraq, but Yazīd b. al-Muhallab persuaded Sulaymān to let him govern from Khurāsān itself, which became the base of his campaigns against Jurjān and Ṭabaristān. Under 'Umar II, who supervised the actions of his governors to an unprecedented degree, the vast eastern governorate was broken up into different units, each responsible to the Caliph. Under Yazīd II, Maslamah was given joint control over al-Kūfah, al-Basrah, and Khurāsān, appointing his own governors over each locality. These shifts in administrative policy point to the fact that by the turn of the century the Umayyad government had effectively lost control of the administration of Khurāsān and the East.

In addition to the conduct of the Holy War, another major concern of the provincial governors was the collection and distribution of tribute money. The governors, the Arab tribesmen, and the Caliph were divided over the issue of whether the income from the yearly tribute should be disposed of in its entirety in the provinces or conveyed to the central government. In the year 97/715-716, Sulaymān, sensitive to the complaints of his subjects in Iraq, who had suffered under the fiscal policy of al-Ḥajjāj, sought to keep the fiscal affairs of that province under his own control by appointing his own personal representative there with special responsibility for taxation. Yazīd b. al-Muhallab was arrested by 'Umar II in the year 100/718-719 because of his failure to convey to the treasury the fifth of the booty that he had collected during the conquest of Jurjān and Ṭabaristān, a sum of six million dinārs about which he had vainly boasted in a letter to Sulaymān. Similarly, Maslamah was dismissed by his half brother Yazīd in the year 102/720-721 when he failed to send surplus revenue to the Caliph in Damascus. His replacement, 'Umar b. Hubayrah, introduced a plan according to which the right of the Arab tribesmen to the yearly tribute was limited to the amount of their stipends, while the surplus belonged to the central treasury. These struggles further reflect the breakdown of central control.

Another major source of discontent was the non-Arabs who expected to be relieved of certain taxes upon converting to Islam. This expectation posed a dilemma for the central government which, in an effort to prevent a decline in revenues, either tried to

prevent conversion to Islam or took no note of it when collecting taxes. The issue seems to have reached a climax during the caliphate of 'Umar II, who instituted his famous fiscal rescript designed to address the problems related to conversion. According to the rescript, non-Arab clients were to be freed from the *kharāj* tax and stipends were to be paid to every Muslim who accepted his military obligation, regardless of whether he was an Arab or a convert. These reforms, however, were allowed to lapse upon 'Umar's death.

Religious opposition also posed a threat to the Umayyad regime. A Khārijite revolt in the year 100/718–719, led by Shawdhab, was initially handled in a diplomatic manner by 'Umar II, "the righteous man," who summoned representatives of the rebels to enter into negotiations. After 'Umar's untimely death, the revolt was brutally suppressed by Yazīd II. Religious opposition was a factor in the revolt of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, who summoned his followers to "the Book and the *Sunnah*," and received support from both the Khārijites and the Murji'ites. But the main source of religious opposition was the clandestine 'Abbāsīd movement that would eventually topple the dynasty. Ṭabarī reports that 'Abbāsīd propaganda began in earnest in the year 100/718–719, when three emissaries who were sent to Khurāsān by Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Abbās succeeded in enlisting seventy recruits for the movement. Even if the suspicions of Western scholars regarding the chronological accuracy of this report are justified, it is nevertheless the case that the 'Abbāsīd propaganda was in place by the year 104/722–23.

Ṭabarī presents the events of the years 96–105/715–724 in considerable detail and with great vividness. We listen to the stirring speeches of Qutaybah b. Muslim in which he urges his followers to renounce their allegiance to Sulaymān; are present at the disastrous third and final attempt to take Constantinople; watch from behind the scenes as Rajā' b. Ḥaywah skillfully engineers the accession of 'Umar II; and follow the remarkable career of Yazīd b. al-Muhallab, first as a governor and conqueror, then as a prisoner, and finally as a rebel. Throughout this volume we observe the struggle of the Umayyad regime to maintain control over a rapidly expanding but increasingly dissatisfied subject population. Governors are appointed and dismissed with dizzying

rapidity, administrative boundaries are drawn and redrawn, Arab tribesmen express dissatisfaction with the diminishing rewards of military conquest, non-Arab converts chafe at the differential treatment they receive, and religious opponents revolt in the name of "the Book and the *Sunnah*." Important in their own respect, the events of this period also constitute an essential key to understanding the 'Abbāsīd revolution that was about to unfold.

There remains the pleasant duty of acknowledging the indispensable assistance of friends and colleagues who contributed to the making of this translation. My colleague, Samia Mehrez, read through much of the Arabic text with me and helped to clarify the meaning of many difficult expressions. Richard Jacquemond offered valuable comments on an early draft of the manuscript. Three members of the Ṭabarī editorial board who read parts or all of the manuscript with great care, Franz Rosenthal, Jacob Lassner, and Ihsan Abbas, were especially helpful with difficult sections of the Arabic text and poetry. Finally, I am grateful to Judith Ginsburg for assistance with the Latin glosses of the Leiden text, to Penny Beebe for help with matters of style, and to Raihana Zaman for her patience and fortitude when called upon to type seemingly endless drafts of the translation. Needless to say, the responsibility for any mistakes that remain are mine and mine alone.

David Stephan Powers

The End of Expansion
Volume XXV
Translated by Khalid Yahya Blankinship

This volume deals with the part of Ṭabarī's great *History* covering the first fifteen years of the caliphate of the Umayyad Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik, which represents almost the last period of universal political unity in Islamic history. Ṭabarī's work is generally recognized as among the most important sources for Hishām's reign. Here the bitter fighting faced by the Muslim forces on the frontiers receives extensive and graphic coverage. In particular, the unrewarding and continuous war against the pagan Turks in Khurāsān, a struggle that did so much to alienate the troops and thus to spread disaffection with Umayyad rule, is recorded in much more detail than elsewhere. Military disasters such as the Day of Thirst, the Day of Kamarjah, and the Day of the Defile are vividly portrayed.

Ṭabarī also devotes considerable attention to the growing internal problems that clouded the latter days of Hishām's rule, including the persistent contest for power between the great tribal groupings and the struggle of non-Arab Muslims for a better status for themselves in the Islamic state. The burgeoning fiscal difficulties that threatened the state under Hishām are also highlighted. Additionally, there are many reports of the earliest 'Abbāsid revolutionary activity. This volume is not only essential for the study of the reign of Hishām but also for understanding the background of the Umayyads' downfall and the establishment of 'Abbāsid rule, laying bare some of the roots of the final breakdown of Islamic political unity.

SUNY Series in Near Eastern Studies
Said Amir Arjomand, Editor



The State University of New York Press

THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXV

The End of Expansion:

THE CALIPHATE OF HISHĀM

A.D. 724-738/A.H. 105-120



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XXV

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translated

by

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Preface



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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Translator's Foreword

This volume of Ṭabarī's history covers the first fifteen years of the caliphate of Hishām b. 'Abd al-Malik (105-120/724-738), which represents nearly the last epoch of universal political unity in Islamic history and of apparent political stability under the Umayyads. Ṭabarī's general subject is the history of Islam and its universal caliphate, which reached its widest extent at this time. Thus one might hope for a comprehensive treatment in this volume of the lands under Hishām's rule, but this is not the case. A historian covering such a large geographical area must be selective, and Ṭabarī must be thanked for giving us as much as he has. But his interest is confined in this volume almost entirely to the East, particularly Khurāsān and Iraq, with even metropolitan Syria brought in mainly to show the relationship of these two provinces to the seat of Umayyad power. Not only is North Africa almost entirely ignored, as throughout Ṭabarī generally, but so are Egypt, Arabia, and Western Iran. This seems to be a conscious selection on the writer's part, as local sources for these areas were apparently available. Like most ancient histories, Ṭabarī's work is also somewhat limited in the way it covers even the provinces it is concerned with, by stressing the noble and ruling elements rather than the common people, for example, or by evincing more interest in wars and battles than in peaceful developments. However, this deficiency is perhaps less than that often met with in similar chronicles of ancient or medieval history, as much social and economic information can be gleaned from the pages of the

present volume. In this respect Ṭabarī's narratives may prefigure more modern historical concerns. And Ṭabarī's own special interests, such as campaigns in Khurāsān, enjoy by far the best coverage available in any source and are thoroughly dealt with.

Ṭabarī's value as a historian depends heavily on the value of his sources, as his own input is mainly limited to the selection and arrangement of the material. He quotes extensively from the works of historians of the end of the second and the beginning of the third century of the hijrah, prominent among whom are, in order of frequency of quotation, Madā'inī (d.215/830), Wāqidī (d.207/822), Abū 'Ubaydah (d.210/825) and al-Haytham b. 'Adī (d.207/822). These men were born around the beginning of 'Abbasid rule and thus were able to hear the accounts of other eyewitnesses to the period covered by the present volume. Frequently however, their accounts came through intermediate transmitters who probably had often written them down some time before the later historians included them in their works. In either case, the likelihood of the accuracy of Ṭabarī's narratives relating to Hishām's reign is enhanced by the relatively short time between the events and their being written down and by the fact that living eyewitnesses or contemporaries to the events were used as informants for the written sources Ṭabarī used.

Indeed, the narratives themselves here show less tendentiousness than is found in some other parts of Ṭabarī, such as in the material drawn from Sayf b. 'Umar. Hishām, though so hated by the 'Abbāsid revolutionaries that his corpse was exhumed, hacked up and crucified, is not painted in the blackest of colors here, which lends some credibility to Ṭabarī's accounts. For example, on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 106/725, Hishām is shown unwilling to curse 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (p. 1483), he piously leads the prayers over recently deceased religious personages, one a grandson of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, and he greets the grandson of Abū Bakr in a friendly manner (p.1472). Khālid al-Qasrī, the great viceroy of the East, receives a mixed treatment, evidently a composite from different sources. Each governor of Khurāsān is also dealt with from various points of view, not wholly unfavorably. Thus Ashras al-Sulamī is nicknamed both "the Perfect" (p. 1504) and "Frog" (p. 1505), showing opposite views about him. Interestingly, both reports come through Madā'inī, and their respective tribal sources,

the Muḍar and the Bakr, reveal that these are expected partisan opinions. Also, al-Junayd al-Murri, though probably rightly condemned by Khurāsānī poets for the disastrous Battle of the Defile (pp. 1553-9), is favorably portrayed elsewhere (pp. 1533, 1565).

This does not mean, though, that Ṭabarī's accounts are free from bias. Indeed, many of the competing tribal accounts are violently biased against their rivals. But the author shows no favoritism for one group over another, as he quotes from all the different tribal factions.

A notable tendency of this section of Ṭabarī, and not unique to him among the sources, is his heavy reliance for Hishām's reign on Khurāsānī sources, which tend to exalt Khurāsānī personages and army units at the expense of others, especially the Syrians. Naṣr b. Sayyār, for example, is always seen in a favorable light and his self-congratulatory poetry extensively quoted. The sufferings of the Khurāsānī troops are graphically portrayed in the various battles. But the Khurāsānīs do also sometimes come in for criticism. Al-Mujashshir al-Sulamī, who had an extremely long career as a Khurāsānī notable, usually is shown giving good advice to the amirs (e.g., p. 1544) but on the day of Kharistān is ridiculed by Asad al-Qasrī for his timidity (p. 1608).

Probably the most problematic accounts are those telling about early 'Abbāsīd missionary work, as this was carried on in secret and as embarrassing facts were probably early suppressed. Certain statements, such as the accusations levelled against 'Ammār or 'Umārah b. Yazīd ("Khidāsh") are probably false (p. 1588). Otherwise, the brave martyrs of the 'Abbāsīd movement are gloriously portrayed (pp. 1501-3). But the coverage of the movement is uneven and must be read in conjunction with other sources, such as the anonymous and immensely important *Akhbār al-Dawlah al-'Abbāsiyyah*.

The literary quality of Ṭabarī's history also deserves consideration. Though some lines consist of dry chronicling of events, the bulk of the text contains lively, exciting war narratives that make fascinating reading, conveying a vibrant portrayal of the feelings of the participants. Outstanding among these are the detailed accounts of the campaigns of Kamarjah (pp. 1516-25), the Defile (pp. 1531-59) and Kharistān (pp. 1593-1618), which reveal the desperation felt by the Muslims in their long struggle with the Turks.

Ṭabarī's text is also punctuated by poetry, especially that relating to the battles and their results. Startling the reader with their graphic imagery and stirring language, the poems by the otherwise unknown al-Shar'abī al-Ṭā'ī and Ibn 'Irs al-'Abdī (pp. 1554-9) convey the poets' impression of the exhaustion and desperation the Muslims felt after the Battle of the Defile, as well as of their rage toward their commander. Contrasting with this virile poetry is the elaborate literary language of the court, with its complex parallelisms epitomized by the long letters sent by Hishām to Khālid al-Qasrī and the Umayyad notable the latter had insulted (pp. 1642-6). Although flowery and carefully constructed rather than spontaneous, these too are not ineffective in getting their message across. Even if they turn out to be inauthentic compositions of somewhat later date, like the speeches of Thucydides, they do still clearly represent the development of the chancery style so widely met with in official writing in the Muslim world for a long time after.

Analyzing the contents of this volume reveals the fewness of the subjects Ṭabarī has chosen to dwell on, which in turn discloses his purpose. He has opted to treat narrow areas in depth while totally omitting much else, rather than to spread himself thin over the whole territory of Dār al-Islām. Dealing with the reign of Hishām, he has concentrated with a singleness of purpose on painting the background of the 'Abbāsids' advent to power, although events in other provinces such as North Africa were significant. Hence the desperate conditions of the Khurāsānīs receive top billing, while even Iraq and Syria are mainly subordinated to events in the far eastern province where 'Abbāsīd rule arose.

In fact, the fifteen years covered by this volume were indeed ones of epic struggle, as the Muslim caliphate seemed to be fighting for its very life. Hishām's reign witnessed the state's resources stretched to the breaking point. The furious Turkish onslaught of 102-19/720-37 detailed by Ṭabarī left the Khurāsānī Arab tribal regiments decimated, even though the enemy was finally defeated. A continuous series of hard-fought battles including the relief of Qaṣr al-Bāhili 102/720, the Day of Thirst 106/724, Kamar-jah 110/728, the Day of the Defile 113/731, and Kharistān 119/737, along with many others mentioned by Ṭabarī and possibly others not mentioned, such as the fall of Samarqand possibly in 113/731,

led to high Muslim losses. It is most notable that after the Day of the Defile, many Khurāsānī tribal surnames never again appear as part of the army in Khurāsān, leading one to suppose they had been annihilated or their men had given up fighting. Some Khurāsānī troops remain, of course, but their divisions are now paralleled by Syrian ones. Thus it appears, particularly from Ṭabarī's emphasis, that the Day of the Defile was practically a turning point in the war with the Turks, at least as far as the Khurāsānis were concerned and, despite the army being rescued, was a Pyrrhic victory at best. Elsewhere, the period had witnessed only a year previously in 112/730 the destruction of al-Jarrāḥ al-Ḥakamī in the Caucasus, another big, or possibly bigger, disaster in which even the commander, a famous general, was slain. Ṭabarī describes this only briefly, however, as he also does with regard to the annual campaigns against the Byzantines, some of which were also disastrous for the Muslims, such as that of 113/731 (p. 1560). Unmentioned are the festering troubles in North Africa and the defeat of 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Ghāfiqī at Balāṭ al-Shuhadā' in France in 114/732, where the Muslim advance into Europe was permanently checked. These military crises on virtually every front belie the apparent calm inside the boundaries of the Muslim caliphate and must have contributed heavily to releasing the pent-up internal forces that would bring down the Umayyads.

Indeed, Ṭabarī reveals the actual internal instability of the state under Hishām, despite the general outward calm on the surface. Crises in Khurāsān resulting from backsliding on the promised removal of tax burdens from the *mawālī*, the non-Arab Muslims, as described in this volume, had their parallels elsewhere, for example, in North Africa under Yazīd b. Abī Muslim. Failure to deal effectively with the problem led ominously to the revolt of al-Hārith b. Surayj from at least 116/734 onward. In Iraq, small Khārijite revolts occurred, whose leaders are often given the stature of heroes. Most remarkable is the government's frightened overreaction, which lays bare a jittery state of mind, despite the smallness of the revolts themselves. Also, the cruel punishments meted out to rebels and heretics by the Umayyad government in this period stick in the reader's mind, as Ṭabarī doubtless intended, and further point to the frenzied alarm it felt.

That all is not well with the state is also emphasized by the ap-

parent corruption of the governors. As governorships were often briefly held, they seem to have been looked on as an opportunity to get rich, as in the story of Ziyād b. 'Ubaydallāh al-Ḥārithī (pp. 1468-71). This possibility gains support from the frequent torturing of ex-governors by their successors in order to get them to disgorge their wealth. In the present volume, this befell 'Umārah b. Ḥuraym al-Murri (p. 1565), the successor of al-Junayd, 'Āsim b. 'Abdallāh (p. 1581) and Khālid al-Qasrī (e.g., pp. 1654-5). In addition 'Umar b. Hubayrah and Muslim b. Sa'īd at least felt the threat of similar treatment (pp. 1485, 1488). The vast estates amassed and sums of money supposedly embezzled by Khālid al-Qasrī also paint for us an extravagant picture of exploitation of an office for one's own benefit and that of one's retainers (pp. 1641-2, 1648, 1654-5).

If all this is to find any explanation aside from personal greed, it must be sought in the realm of tribal party politics. As the spoils system then at work allowed every new governor to fill all posts with political appointees from his own party, his own supporters and retainers would inevitably clamor for such posts. And this indeed seems to have been the fate of Khālid al-Qasrī, who is shown almost broke after having distributed all his gains to his party (p. 1651).

The downfall of Khālid in 120/738 after more than fourteen years as viceroy of the East is another epochmaking, watershed event to which Ṭabarī devotes considerable attention. Unfortunately, in spite of the numerous possible causes cited in these pages, the exact reason for his dismissal cannot be discerned with certainty, but it is highly likely that Ṭabarī has not included all of the background of this important change. Some of the reasons alleged, such as slighting comments made by Khālid about Hishām or the former's insulting behaviour toward Ibn 'Amr b. Sa'īd (pp. 1642-7), are too trivial to be the cause, though altogether they may have presented an uppitness the Umayyads found provoking. The financial reasons are perhaps important, especially given a possible financial crisis caused by the vast scale of military operations in Hishām's reign. This may have led him to demand much greater fiscal accountability and stringency than was the case in previous reigns, which in turn may have left Hishām with his lasting reputation for avarice. But it is also probable that partisan disputes in

the Umayyad house itself, perhaps extending to the Syrian army leadership, had much to do with Khālid's dismissal. It is unlikely that the death of Maslamah b. 'Abd al-Malik only five months before Khālid's downfall was irrelevant to that event. Maslamah, the elder statesman of the Umayyad house, himself deprived of the succession owing to his being the son of a concubine, had always been a guiding and restraining influence, and Khālid probably would not have held the governorship of Iraq for fourteen years without his approval. Hishām had been unable to alter the succession in favor of his own son over Maslamah's opposition, and with Maslamah gone might have been more willing to bow to family pressures to remove Khālid, which Ṭabarī alludes to (pp. 1646, 1655-6). Whatever the case, the subject needs further study. It is Khālid's long rule that gives the period some of its outward appearance of stability, just as his sudden exit from the political stage at the end of this volume, along with the death of his brother Asad in the same year, foreshadows the Umayyads' own collapse shortly afterwards.

Khālid's replacement as viceroy of the East was the fanatical Qaysi Yūsuf b. 'Umar al-Thaqafī. His appointment and harsh acts against the opposing Yamani faction nearly completed the total breakdown in the ability of the two groups to live in peace in the same state. Such factionalism had already appeared at al-Barūqān early in Hishām's reign in 106/724 in a clash between the Mudar and the Yaman-Rabī'ah (pp. 1473-7). In fact, the increasing tribal factionalism is one of the salient motifs of Hishām's reign. It not only took place between the dominant Syrians and the provincial Arabs, such as the Khurāsānīs, as we have pointed out already, but was often more virulent between the Qays or Mudar and Yaman-Rabī'ah factions inside each province and apparently throughout the caliphate, as it is attested in Ṭabarī or elsewhere in Khurāsān, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, North Africa and Spain, for Hishām's time or shortly thereafter. The underlying basis of it has been much discussed, for example, by Wellhausen¹, Shaban² and Crone.³ Generally it has been felt that such widespread rivalries and disor-

1. Wellhausen, *Arab Kingdom*, 180-2, 201-2, 208-11, 259-61, 322, 326, 328-9, 359-60 and passim.

2. Shaban, *Islamic History*, 120-4, 146, 152, 154-5, 170-1.

3. Crone, *Slaves*, 37-48.

ders must have a more immediate effective cause than mere tribal feuding and that the tribes in any case do not represent primeval social groups but rival army units or political factions. This belief receives support from the ability of certain tribes to change their membership in the larger groupings almost at will, like the seemingly opportunistic Bāhilah in 106/724 (pp. 1473-7). Originally from southeastern Arabia near the Gulf, perhaps near Abū Zābi, this large tribe became great with Qutaybah b. Muslim, the inveterate Qaysī (d. 96/715), but here, only a few years later, Qutaybah's brother is leader of the Yaman-Rabī'ah faction, the Bāhilah now claiming to belong to the Banū Ma'n, part of the Yamani Azd. Additionally, the Raba'i Taghlib try to claim them. In each case, a genealogy is provided justifying their factional membership. Another example is Asad al-Qasrī's beating of the leaders of each of the four major tribal groupings in Khurāsān (pp. 1498-1500) and then wrongly being accused of tribal favoritism. Here the Khurāsānis' resentment toward the central government is more important than tribal divisions among themselves.

But certain observations are in order before tribal group feeling is dismissed as a motivation. First, throughout Ṭabarī's history of the Umayyads all persons, whether in the military or not, are usually identified by their tribal *nisbah*, the badge of membership in one of the 200 or more primeval or at least pre-Islamic tribes of Arabia. Non-Arabs also have this membership as clients (*mawālī*) of one tribe or another. Although a certain amount of intermarriage was possible, often for political reasons, this did not strongly affect the feeling of belonging to a patrilineal descent in a particular primeval tribe. Thus, although Naṣr b. Sayyār's mother was from the Raba'i Taghlib and his two known wives from the Tamīm, his own loyalty to the Layth is shown by the number of his close associates from that tribe. Suffice it to say that membership in a smaller tribal group was in this period the main means of social identification inside the Muslim community. The larger tribal groupings were more artificial, although not wholly so, as they also tended to go back to defined geographical areas in Arabia. But they too took on a strong tribal coloration replete with ethnic feeling that prevailed right down to the end of the Umayyad rule and recurred sporadically thereafter. That certain tribes changed their larger groupings does not mean that

most did so. The Bāhilah's finding their way back to membership in the Ma'n of the Yamanī Azd shows only their understandable reversion to the group of their original geographical neighbors in Arabia after they were unnaturally sundered from them by Qutaybah's service to al-Ḥajjāj and the opportunity that gave him to promote his tribe to better status. Finally, it might well be wondered whether the Muḍar tribes on the whole were not more nomadic and the Yaman more sedentary and whether that did not play a role in forming their attitudes originally and contributing to their rivalry and mutual aversion across the caliphate. This is also a subject for further study.

I would like to thank the Ṭabarī Translation Project for the opportunity to participate in their great enterprise. I would especially like to thank Professor Jere L. Bacharach of the University of Washington for his generous help in all phases of the translation and especially for the many helpful suggestions he made to improve both the wording of the text and the quality of the notes. I would also like to thank Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking editing of my text. Further, I would like to express my gratitude to Ali Bakr Hassan of the Arabic Language Academy in Cairo and the University of Washington who helped to elucidate certain obscure words and passages in the Arabic. Deepest thanks is also due to April Richardson of the University of Washington who kindly typed the manuscript and bore with me through numerous subsequent corrections and emendations. Last but not least, I wish to thank my wife, may Allah bless her heart, who gave me moral encouragement and urged me on to complete the work in the shortest time possible.

Khalid Yahya Blankinship

The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate
Volume XXVI
Translated by Carole Hillenbrand

The years 738-745/121-127, which this volume covers, saw the outbreak in Syria of savage internecine struggles between prominent members of the Umayyad family, which had ruled the Islamic world since 661/41. After the death of the caliph Hishām in 743/125, the process of decay at the center of Umayyad power—the ruling family itself—was swift and devastating. Three Umayyad caliphs (al-Walid II, Yazīd III, and Ibrāhīm) followed Hishām within little more than a year, and the subsequent intervention of their distant cousin Marwān b. Muhammad (the future Marwān II) could not arrest the forces of opposition that were shortly to culminate in the ʿAbbāsīd Revolution of 750/132.

In this volume al-Ṭabarī deals extensively with the end of Hishām's reign, providing a rich store of anecdotes on this most able of Umayyad caliphs. He also covers in depth the notorious lifestyle of al-Walid II, the libertine prince and poet, whose career has attracted much scholarly attention in recent years. Moreover, al-Ṭabarī chronicles at great length the events of the rebellion and death of the Shīʿite pretender, Zayd b. ʿAlī, at al-Kūfah, as well as recording in detail the activities farther to the east, where Naṣr b. Sayyār was serving as the last Umayyad governor of Transoxiana and Khurāsān, the very area from which the ʿAbbāsīd Revolution was to spring. The text also contains several official letters which shed much light on Umayyad propaganda and on early Islamic epistolary style.

The hindsight conferred by subsequent centuries highlights the full significance of these half-dozen years or so. Al-Ṭabarī documents the incubation of the ʿAbbāsīd Revolution, an event of great importance in world history, and traces the failure of the principal Shīʿite revolt of the eighth century, a debacle which was also to have serious repercussions, for it generated the foundation of Zaydi principalities in Iran and the Yemen. Yet even these major themes are secondary to the epic tale that al-Ṭabarī unfolds of the tragic downfall of the first dynasty in Islam.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXVI

The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate

PRELUDE TO REVOLUTION

A.D. 738-745 / A.H. 121-127



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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXVI

The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate

translated and annotated
by

Carole Hillenbrand

University of Edinburgh

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into thirty-eight volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash

(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, according to Ibn Humayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Humayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Abbreviations



Arch. Or.: Archiv Orientální

BEO: Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales de l'Institut Français de Damas

EI¹: Encyclopaedia of Islām, first edition.

EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam, second edition.

JA: Journal Asiatique

JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JHS: Journal of Hellenic Studies

JSS: Journal of Semitic Studies

RSO: Rivista degli studi orientali

SI: Studia Islamica



Translator's Foreword



The years 121-26 (738-44), which are covered in this volume, saw the outbreak of savage internecine struggles between members of the ruling Umayyad family in Syria. Once the towering figures of the Umayyad caliph Hishām, presented in the sources as a most able if somewhat unattractive and parsimonious figure, and his redoubtable governor in Iraq, Khālid al-Qasrī, had died, the process of decay at the center of Umayyad power, the ruling family itself, was swift and devastating. Al-Walid II, his cousin Yazid b. al-Walid and Yazid's brother Ibrāhīm all ruled as caliph within the space of little more than a year, and when finally their distant cousin, the shrewd and seasoned politician Marwān b. Muḥammad, made his move from Armenia to seize power in Syria, he was not able to arrest the impetus of the forces of opposition that were gathering momentum against the Umayyads and that were shortly to culminate in the 'Abbāsīd revolution.

In its account of these momentous years, al-Ṭabarī's history concentrates on three major areas of the Islamic world: Syria, the center of Umayyad power; the garrison town of al-Kūfah in Iraq; and the eastern provinces of Khurāsān and Transoxiana. It is worthy of note that Spain, North Africa, Egypt, and the Hijāz are barely mentioned at all.

Al-Ṭabarī records the end of Hishām's reign in exhaustive detail, and with a rich store of biographical anecdotes, before turning his attention to the notorious life-style of al-Walid II, both before and after his accession to the caliphate. In spite of al-Ṭabarī's protestations that he has omitted many of the scabrous

stories about al-Walid (cf. p. 1775), he gives a detailed account of this talented, if slightly deranged, member of the Umayyad family on whom subsequent 'Abbāsid anti-Umayyad propaganda fell with particular weight.

Al-Ṭabarī chronicles at great length the events surrounding the last years of the Prophet Muḥammad's great-great-grandson, Zayd b. 'Alī, his various litigation proceedings, his unsuccessful rebellion and his death in al-Kūfah, and finally, the hounding and eventual murder in Khurāsān of Zayd's son, Yaḥyā. Turning further to the east, al-Ṭabarī records in detail the activities of the last Umayyad governor of Khurāsān, Naṣr b. Sayyār.

To what extent al-Ṭabarī's selection of his material for these five crucial years is dictated by the availability of historiographical, oral, and archival sources, or by a deliberate emphasis on these three geographical areas, it is impossible to say. The reader cannot, however, dispute the undeniable importance of the events chronicled by al-Ṭabarī for an understanding of the manifold elements of disaffection against the Umayyads which shortly afterward erupted into revolution.

What of the sources on which al-Ṭabarī draws for his account of the events in these three main geographical areas? For his coverage of the Umayyad caliphs—Hishām, al-Walid II, and Yazīd III—in Syria, al-Ṭabarī relies heavily on reports from al-Madā'inī (died probably in 228/843), through the latter's pupil Aḥmad b. Zuhayr (died 279/892), a Ḥanbalī from Baghdad whose work *al-Ta'rikh al-kabīr* (extant only in fragmentary form) was a direct source for al-Ṭabarī.

For his narrative of events in Iraq, for the torture and death of Khālīd al-Qasrī at the hands of Yūsuf b. 'Umar and especially for the lengthy accounts of the litigation and rebellion of Zayd b. 'Alī, al-Ṭabarī's major source is Abū Mikhnaḥ (died 157/774), usually through reports transmitted by Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī (died 204 or 206/819 or 821). The importance accorded by Abū Mikhnaḥ to the rebellion of Zayd b. 'Alī probably sprang more from geographical factors than religious conviction. The Kūfan historian naturally gave thorough coverage of local events without necessarily revealing a Shī'ite bias. Indeed, Abū Mikhnaḥ's account of Zayd's marriage in al-Kūfah (pp. 1685–86) could be

construed as slightly derogatory to him. Nor, moreover, does al-Ṭabarī opt to omit this episode, as does al-Balādhurī.

Al-Ṭabarī uses reports of Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī, quoting either Abū Mikhnaḥ or other unspecified sources. Hishām al-Kalbī was also a Kūfan and had access to material both from Abū Mikhnaḥ and from his own father, Muḥammad al-Kalbī. Hishām's son, al-'Abbās, who is known to have been an informant for al-Balādhurī, may well have been the missing transmitter through whom al-Ṭabarī derived the information, if it was passed on orally.

For his material on Khurāsān and Transoxiana, all of al-Ṭabarī's attributed reports come from al-Madā'inī, a historian who was highly praised by 'Abbāsid and later Muslim scholars as an authority on events in the eastern Islamic world. Much of the information provided by al-Madā'inī in al-Ṭabarī's coverage of these years is not extant in any other sources. The material is therefore difficult to assess: sometimes it is very lacunary and on other occasions the anecdotes are full and have the flavor of composite accounts or folk tales.

This section of al-Ṭabarī's history contains a number of interesting chancery or *inshā'* documents which, if authentic (and they probably are), have considerable value. These include the correspondence between the caliph Hishām and his heir-apparent, al-Walīd, which records the deterioration in their relationship (pp. 1746-49). For this correspondence there are parallel versions in the *Ansāb* and the *Aghānī*. By far the most challenging of these documents (and of daunting difficulty to the translator) is the elaborate and lengthy epistle of al-Walīd, designating his two young sons as his successors (pp. 1756-64). It is clear that the text is corrupt in a number of places and there is no other extant version with which to compare it. Nevertheless, in spite of its verbal conceits, contorted style, and tedious length, it is at times a *tour de force*, an arousing and persuasive piece of early Arabic rhetorical prose.

The poetry in this volume is of varying quality, most of it poor. The arrangement of the lines of verse is often unsatisfactory and probably on occasion out of sequence. Rising above the mediocre, however, is the fine poetry that is attributed to al-Walīd II himself

and that was edited by Gabrieli from the texts of al-Ṭabarī, al-İşfahānī, and Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi.

My remarks on the manuscripts of al-Ṭabarī's history, which form the basis of this section of the Leiden edition, must inevitably be limited, since I have not had the opportunity to view the manuscripts personally. M. J. de Goeje, who took over from D. H. Müller the task of editing these pages, used three manuscripts—those in Oxford (O), the British Museum (BM), and Berlin (B)—for most of this section of the text (pp. 1667–1811). Thereafter he was limited to only two (BM and B), since the Oxford manuscript had come to an end (pp. 1811–25). For the final pages he had only one manuscript (O), as the British Museum manuscript had also finished (p. 1825).

Considerable help is provided by other parallel sources at certain points in this section of al-Ṭabarī's text. The *Kitāb al-'uyūn wa-al-ḥadā'iq fī akhbār al-ḥaqā'iq*, edited by M. J. de Goeje and P. de Jong under the title *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum* (and abbreviated in this volume as *Fragmenta*) covers much of the material on the Umayyad caliphs. Many of the details of the relationship between Hishām and al-Walid and of the brief caliphate of al-Walid, provided by al-Ṭabarī, are also to be found in al-İşfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashraf*. The wording of the *Ansāb* is almost always identical with that found in the later *Fragmenta*.

For the events concerning Zayd b. 'Alī and his son Yahyā, there are parallel, often identical, accounts to be found in the *Ansāb* and in al-İşfahānī's *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*. For Khurāsān and Transoxiana there is, however, a paucity of early extant sources which would help to clarify a number of obscurities in the relevant part of al-Ṭabarī's text. There are only Narshakhī's *History of Bukhārā*, which gives an account of the murder of the Bukhār Khudāh very like that of al-Ṭabarī (pp. 1693–94), and al-Dīnawarī's version of the exploits of al-Kirmānī (pp. 1858–66), which at times diverges considerably from al-Ṭabarī's account.

The basis of the translation provided here has been the Leiden text. Although there are a number of unsolved textual difficulties, de Goeje's editing achievement with its full critical apparatus still excites admiration even after the lapse of a century. The Cairo edition of al-Ṭabarī has also been consulted throughout. At

times it has helped in the clarification of textual problems. On other occasions it has been found to make changes in the text without satisfactory explanation.

There is a considerable corpus of secondary scholarly literature which helps to throw light on this crucial section of Umayyad history. The general reader is directed to G. R. Hawting's recent book, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate. A.D. 661-750*, for a clear and balanced account of the Umayyads. Further detailed accounts can be found in the pioneer works of Wellhausen, Gibb, and Gabrieli and in the more recent studies of Shaban. For the topography of al-Kūfah, the work of Massignon is still useful, if taken in conjunction with the more recent researches of Djāit.

Several small miscellaneous points require brief mention. All quotations from the Qur'ān have been made from *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, translated by M. Pickthall (London, 1957). Often in the translation names or nouns have been provided instead of pronouns to clarify the narrative, and I have freely used synonyms for the ubiquitous 'said' and 'came.' Bolder changes of word order or other points of translation have been explained in the footnotes. It was not possible to identify all the personalities and place names mentioned in this section of al-Ṭabarī's text, but the notes cover the great majority of these.

Finally, I should like to thank those who have helped with the task of producing this volume. I am most grateful to Mrs. Mona Bennett for her meticulous and patient typing of the translation and footnotes. Warm thanks also go to Dr. 'Abd al-Mu'nim al-Zubaydī, who gave unstintingly of his vast expertise and knowledge to help with the clarification of the substantial quantity of poetry in this volume. Without his help certain of the verses would have remained obscure. My colleague, Dr. M. F. El-Shayyal, read through the whole of the translation and made many valuable suggestions. I would also like to acknowledge the help given to me by Dr. James Allan; by my brother-in-law Dr. Peter Hillenbrand, who advised me on Hishām's alleged angina; by Dr. Ian Howard, who advised me on a number of points of detail; and by Dr. Martin Hinds and Dr. Patricia Crone, who gave me access, just before I completed this book, to the relevant sections of their new book, *God's Caliph*. Martin Hinds also gave me

other helpful information on certain detailed points in the text. Above all, I should like to thank Professor Edmund Bosworth for his constant willingness to help with advice and moral support, and my husband, Dr. Robert Hillenbrand, for his most valuable criticisms and comments.

Carole Hillenbrand

The 'Abbāsid Revolution
Volume XXVII
Translated and Annotated by
John Alden Williams

By 735 an Arab empire stretched from Arles and Avignon in southern France to the Indus River and Central Asia, and a vital young civilization fostered by a new world religion was taking root. Yet the Muslim conquerors were divided by tribal quarrels, tensions among new converts, and religious revolts. In 745 a vigorous new successor to the Prophet took control in Damascus and began to restore the waning power of the Umayyad dynasty. Marwān II's attempts were thwarted, however, by revolts on every hand, even among his own relatives. The main body of dissidents was a well-trained group of revolutionaries in Khurāsān, led by the remarkable Abū Muslim. By 748 they had seized control of the province and driven the governor, Naṣr b. Sayyār al-Laythī, to his death and were advancing westward. This volume tells of the end of the Umayyad caliphate, the 'Abbāsid Revolution, and the establishment of the new dynasty.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXVII

The 'Abbāsīd Revolution

A.D. 743-750/A.H. 126-132



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The History of al-Tabarī
(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XXVII

THE
‘Abbāsīd Revolution

translated and annotated
by

John Alden Williams

University of Texas at Austin

State University of New York Press

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Acknowledgement

In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of

the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Translator's Foreword



In this volume I have followed the transliteration system adopted by the Series, in deference to the judgement of the editor. My personal preference would always be to eliminate the Greek suffix *id* on Arabic and Persian names and nouns to obtain an adjectival form, e.g. °Abbāsīd, °Alīd, Umayyad, and to use the Islamic *nisba* form used in the Middle East ending in *-ī*, which has gained currency in modern English usage, e.g. Israeli, Pahlavi, Saudi. The terminal *h* for a *tā marbūṭa(h)* might also in my view be left to the general desuetude into which it is falling, e.g. in the new *Enclopaedia of Islam*.

I must express my deep gratitude to the Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University which kindly sustained me with a research fellowship for one year during which parts of this volume and of others were completed; to the Harvard Center for the Study of World Religions, which offered me and my family its hospitality during the year, and to the American University in Cairo which allowed me a year of leave. My colleagues Ahmed Sharkas at Harvard and Adel Sulaiman Gamal at American University in Cairo and University of Arizona helped me often with the poetry passages, and I would record my thanks to them here.

Professor George Makdisi of the University of Pennsylvania read the greater part of the translation against the originals and offered invaluable suggestions in the midst of trying circumstances: a most generous act. Professor Jacob Lassner made many thoughtful addi-

tions to the footnotes, and where this occurred I have indicated it in the notes. To Professor Ehsan Yar-Shater who has seen to the publication of this volume and others of al-Ṭabarī, very special thanks are due.

John Alden Williams
Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The University of Texas at Austin

‘Abbāsīd Authority Affirmed
Volume XXVIII
Translated by Jane Dammen McAuliffe

The initial years (126-145) of al-Manṣūr's reign presented several significant challenges to nascent ‘Abbāsīd hegemony, and the resulting confrontations constitute the central focus of this section of Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh*. After Abū Ja‘far succeeded his brother Abū al-‘Abbās as caliph, the second of the ‘Abbāsīd dynasty, he moved against his recalcitrant uncle, ‘Abdallāh b. ‘Alī, and against the potential threat that he perceived in the person of the commander in Khurāsān, Abū Muslim. Eliminating the latter and containing the former freed the caliph to address a series of other onslaughts and insurrections.

Starting with the year 144, however, Ṭabarī turned to this volume's principal preoccupation, to which half of the book is devoted. Judging by the attention given to it, he clearly perceived the Ḥasanid rebellions of Muḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh (the Pure Soul) and of his brother Ibrāhīm to be the most substantial attack on ‘Abbāsīd authority to arise in the first years of that dynasty. Ṭabarī's description of the prolonged search for Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm and of the caliphal vengeance visited upon their father and family provides an extended prelude to the vivid battle and death scenes in Medina and Bākhmrā. Yet, elaboration of these events does not eclipse mention of all other ‘Abbāsīd activity. To bridge the account of Muḥammad's defeat and that of Ibrāhīm's uprising, Ṭabarī inserted a narrative interlude depicting the site selection and preliminary construction of al-Manṣūr's most celebrated achievement, the City of Peace, Baghdad.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXVIII

‘Abbāsīd Authority Affirmed
THE EARLY YEARS OF AL-MANṢŪR
A.D. 753–763 / A.H. 136–145



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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Taʾrīkh al-rusul waʾl-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXVIII

ʿAbbāsīd Authority Affirmed

translated and annotated
by

Jane Dammen McAuliffe

University of Toronto

State University of New York Press

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For my children



Preface



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Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



Addenda et Emendanda: List of textual additions and corrections included in the Leiden introductory volume of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*

AO: *Acta Orientalia*

BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

DMA: *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*. Ed. Joseph R. Strayer. 13 vols. New York, 1982

EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Ed. M. T. Houtsma et al. 8 vols. and supplement. Leiden, 1913–36, reprint 1987

EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed. Ed. H. A. R. Gibb et al. Leiden, 1960–.

EHR: *English Historical Review*

EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 16 vols. Jerusalem, 1972.

ER: *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. Ed. M. Eliade. 15 vols. and index. New York, 1987.

Fragmenta historicorum: *Kitāb al-ʿuyūn wa-al-ḥadāʾiq fī akhbār al-ḥaqāʾiq*

GAL: Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Leiden, 1943–49. *Supplementbände*. 3 vols. Leiden, 1937–42.

GAS: Fuat Sezgin. *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*. Leiden, 1967–.

Glossarium: Glossary included in the Leiden introductory volume of al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh*

IC: *Islamic Culture*

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

IQ: *Islamic Quarterly*

IS: *Islamic Studies*

JA: Journal asiatique

JAOS: Journal of the American Oriental Society

JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient

JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society

JSAL: Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam

MW: The Muslim World

REI: Revue des études islamiques

RH: Revue historique

SI: Studia Islamica

ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft



Translator's Foreword



The caliphate of Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr began and ended far from the city whose foundation was his most celebrated achievement. It was not in Baghdad that he commenced his caliphate but in Mecca. Less than five years after the 'Abbāsids had assumed power, that power passed from one brother to another. The first caliph of the dynasty, 'Abū al-'Abbās al-Saffāh, died in 136/754 during the month of the pilgrimage, and Ṭabarī introduces this volume of his *Ta'rikh* with an announcement of the oath of allegiance that was then rendered in absentia to the dead caliph's brother. At the time of al-Saffāh's death the new caliph was leading the Pilgrimage exercises in the Ḥijāz, where he received news of the transfer of power from his nephew, 'Īsā b. Mūsā. Twenty-one years later, in 158/775, al-Manṣūr was once again on the road to Mecca during this same month of the Pilgrimage, which had also been the month of his birth, when he became unexpectedly ill and died.

The initial years of al-Manṣūr's reign presented several significant challenges to nascent 'Abbāsid hegemony. These confrontations constitute the central focus of Ṭabarī's attention in this volume. Before he concludes his presentation of the transition year 136/754, Ṭabarī relates an exchange that took place between the new caliph and Abū Muslim, a powerful Khurāsānī leader who had accompanied him on the Pilgrimage. In this prescient conversation converge the three principal preoccupations that Abū Ja'far was forced to address in the first decade of his caliph-

ate: 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, Abū Muslim himself, and the 'Alid rebels Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm. Speaking to Abū Muslim, the caliph first expresses uneasiness about his uncle, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, and then alludes to his concern about those groups whose loyalties have coalesced around the figure of 'Alī b. Abī Tālib, the prophet Muḥammad's cousin and son-in-law, and his descendants.

Ṭabarī's record of the year 137 describes the caliph's swift response to this uncle's refusal to acknowledge his sovereignty. He successfully sends Abū Muslim against 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī but then quickly comes to fear the increasing independence and power of the Khurāsānī warrior himself. The accounts of Abū Muslim's murder in the very presence of al-Manṣūr provide a powerful impression of the caliph's relentless resolution. That impression receives strong reinforcement in those scenes from the year 145 when the severed heads of the 'Alid pretenders, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh and Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh, are brought before him.

The major events related in this volume commence, then, with al-Manṣūr's moves in 137 against his recalcitrant uncle and against the potential threat that he perceived in the person of Abū Muslim. They conclude with the defeat and death of Ibrāhīm b. 'Abdallāh in 145. The years immediately following 137 receive relatively brief treatment from Ṭabarī. He mentions the destruction and reconstruction of Malaṭyah, an important Byzantine border town, as well as a Khārijī rebellion and various uprisings consequent upon the death of Abū Muslim. In but a single sentence under the year 139 Ṭabarī notes that the Umayyad prince 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Mu'āwiyah went to Spain, where his descendants continue to rule, a sentence that represents virtually his only reference to events beyond the central Islamic lands.

For the year 141 Ṭabarī breaks this pattern of somewhat perfunctory reportage. Several episodes draw his attention, chief among them being the uprising of the Rāwandīyyah in al-Hāshimīyyah, the only engagement, in a volume that describes several decisive battles, in which the caliph actively participated. Ṭabarī presents al-Manṣūr as a bold and courageous commander, willing to risk his life to rally his forces and ready to lavish praise and recompense on the rehabilitated Umayyad soldier Ma'n b. Zā'idah. Having experienced danger, however, al-Manṣūr moved promptly to forestall the recurrence of such strategic vulnerabil-

ity. The encounter with the Rāwandīyyah is later reckoned an important reason for the building of Baghdad and the caliph subsequently judged his self-exposure in that battle to be one of the three major mistakes from the likely consequences of which he had been divinely protected.

Starting with the year 144 Ṭabarī concentrates on this volume's central preoccupation. Half the pages in this text develop a description of what he clearly perceived to be the most substantial challenge to 'Abbāsīd authority faced in the first years of that dynasty, the Ḥasanīd rebellions of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh and his brother Ibrāhīm. Virtually all the action occurs within a limited geographical area, closely contained along the corridor running between the two holy sites in the Hijāz and the metropolitan areas of southern Iraq, especially al-Baṣrah and al-Kūfah. The time-line charted in this chapter on the year 144 telescopes the actual sequence of events. Ṭabarī, in fact, first mentions the Ḥasanīd problem in his record of the year 139, with the elliptical remark that summer campaigns against the Byzantines were suspended from that time until 146 "because Abū Ja'far was occupied with matters involving the two sons of 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan." Although that single remark receives no elaboration until the full issue is introduced in the section on year 144, the events recorded therein cover a span of some years.

During those years, then, the caliph was confronted with a situation of unresolved resistance to his hegemony. His initial inclination to rely on the loyalty and enthusiasm of his governor in Medina proved mistaken. Throughout this period, several men held that post. When it was clearly established that the first, Ziyād b. 'Ubaydallāh, had failed to press the search for Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm because his sympathies lay more with them than with the caliph, the latter had him arrested and appointed Muḥammad b. Khālīd in his stead. As this one also proved reluctant to move with alacrity, Abū Ja'far replaced him with Riyāḥ b. 'Uthmān, whose complete dependence on the patronage of al-Manṣūr assured his antipathy to the Ḥasanīds.

Once installed in office, Riyāḥ moved rapidly to secure the caliphal kudos that capture of Muḥammad would ensure. Riyāḥ's forces searched relentlessly and came near to discovering Muḥammad on several occasions. One poignant episode recounts

the death of Muḥammad's infant son, who plunged to his death at the moment his father's mountain hideout was abruptly invaded. By that time Muḥammad's father, 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, had already been arrested for refusing to cooperate with the caliph in providing information on his sons' whereabouts. Other arrests rapidly followed, including that of Muḥammad's son 'Alī, who was seized in Egypt. Eventually Abū Ja'far decided to have the imprisoned supporters, both Ḥasanids and others, taken out of Medina and commanded Riyāḥ to transport them to Iraq, specifically to al-Rabadhah, where the caliph was then in residence.

Tabarī vividly portrays the humiliations endured by the shackled prisoners during this transportation and includes dramatic accounts of the caliphal vengeance exacted upon those who were brought before the sovereign presence. The scenes involving Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr, 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan's stepbrother and great-grandson of the third caliph, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, depict his being severely beaten and stripped naked before a final beheading. Mūsā b. 'Abdallāh, a brother to Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, was scourged to insensibility, while a cousin Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, was entombed alive in a building support. In a cunning effort to consolidate Khurāsānī allegiance, al-Manṣūr then sent the head of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. 'Amr to that province with a proclamation intended to convince people that it was the head of the Ḥasanid pretender, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh.

Meanwhile, that insurgent himself was alive and active in Medina, gathering the support necessary to stage an open rebellion on 27 Jumādā II 145. After the initial actions of storming the city and capturing its governor, Riyāḥ b. 'Uthmān, Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh sent representatives to the major administrative centers in the peninsula. His governor for Mecca, al-Ḥasan b. Mu'āwiyah, successfully subdued the superior forces of Abū Ja'far's incumbent. In the meantime, a succession of messengers informed al-Manṣūr of Muḥammad's uprising, and the caliph prepared his retaliation. When an exchange of correspondence between the two proved futile, Abū Ja'far sought knowledgeable advice, including that of his imprisoned uncle, 'Abdallāh b. 'Alī, and recruited his nephew 'Īsā b. Mūsā to lead the counter-ing forces.

Both internal and external pressures undermined the initial popular support that Muḥammad enjoyed. While 'Īsā b. Mūsā

persuaded leading citizens of Medina to withdraw their allegiance, Muḥammad himself announced clemency for those whose fear of ʿĪsā's advancing forces drove them from the city. As a military staging ground, Medina was a strategic disaster, a fact made clear to both al-Manṣūr and Muḥammad in the respective advice offered to them. Despite the heroic efforts of Muḥammad's remaining supporters, therefore, the city proved ultimately indefensible, and the black banner of the ʿAbbāsīd forces was soon flying from the minaret of the Prophet's mosque. Muḥammad himself fell at the hands of the redoubtable Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭabah, and ʿĪsā sent his head to the caliph.

In the aftermath of defeat, civil chaos gripped Medina as a consequence of the new governor's refusal or inability to discipline the occupying forces. Cheated merchants lashed out, and black slaves rose in revolt, precipitating widespread public disorder. The particular incidents that Ṭabarī relates doubtless reflect the general sense of economic and political uncertainty in post-rebellion Medina.

After a narrative interlude describing the site selection and preliminary construction of Baghdad, Ṭabarī moves on to the second ʿAlid uprising, that mounted by Muḥammad's brother, Ibrāhīm b. ʿAbdallāh. Once more, against a telescoped account of the protagonist's furtive contacts and frequent relocation, Ṭabarī builds a scene of impending eruption. Guided by the reports of his intelligence service, al-Manṣūr acted to forestall Ibrāhīm's suspected strategic maneuvers. Yet when the latter publicly proclaimed his rebellion in al-Baṣrah on the first day of Ramaḍān 145, less than nine weeks after his brother's uprising, the caliph's readiness to respond was hampered by insufficient troop strength. Ibrāhīm's rapid deployment of representatives and forces to al-Ahwāz, Fārs, and Wāsiṭ secured his initial advantage, while Abū Jaʿfar was forced to scour the provinces for military reinforcements.

The tide turned, however, when word of Muḥammad's defeat in the Ḥijāz allowed the caliph to recall ʿĪsā b. Mūsā. After a rapid return, ʿĪsā massed his forces for the final battle at Bākhmrā. Recounting the first stages of this engagement, which favored Ibrāhīm's forces, Ṭabarī depicts ʿĪsā's intrepid resistance in the face of his fleeing troops. After Ibrāhīm suffered strategic misfortunes, however, the ʿAbbāsīd fortune began to ascend once again. An arrow struck the insurgent's throat, and Ḥumayd b. Qaḥṭabah

repeated his lethal attack against an 'Alid pretender, as his troops converged on the stricken Ibrāhīm. Once again a severed head was set before Abū Ja'far, and as this volume draws to a close the caliph weeps at the sight of it, lamenting the consequences of his kinsman's abortive claim.

From the various materials and the multiple accounts with which Ṭabarī composed this section of his history, some elements of particular note stand forth. Among the more interesting are the character delineations offered for Abū Ja'far and Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh. The caliph emerges as a man of relentless intent, willing to pursue an objective by every available means and over a prolonged period of time. His resoluteness verges on atrocity when, for example, he orders the severed head of Muḥammad paraded around al-Kūfah or when he commands a young boy to view his father's corpse as he awaits his own execution. Ṭabarī reports instances when al-Manṣūr gave assurances of safe-conduct only to renege on them later. The caliph's attempt to placate or intimidate the Khurāsānīs through subterfuge, despite the later disclaimer that this was his only lie, compounds the impression of mendacity. More positively, Abū Ja'far is presented as a man willing to seek advice and to heed or reject it as he sees fit. The sources show a man capable of self-critical reflection and one who can acknowledge errors of judgment. A few telling vignettes portray him in prolonged periods of silence and withdrawal, brooding over the dangers he perceives and the decisions he must make. According to some accounts, he could retreat to such an extent that he would refuse to change his garments or to have sexual contact with his wives. In less troubling circumstances, he could offer praise to others and even confess the nickname "Father of Farthings" (Abū Dawānīq), which his reputation for miserliness had inspired.

More than that of his brother Ibrāhīm, the person of Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh comes through these pages as a vivid, multifaceted reality. Physically he was a man of considerable bulk, one whose weight rattled the *minbar* as he mounted its steps. His love of certain foods is noted, and an account treating the day on which Muḥammad died in battle actually mentions his being fed honey dipped in water. His corpulence also provoked

adverse comment, however, because it was perceived as incompatible with the physique of a true warrior. Morally, Muḥammad is represented as a pious Muslim, a man of rectitude who rigorously kept the fast and the rhythms of required and supererogatory prayer and who modeled himself upon his namesake in the conduct of war. Repeatedly, the accounts portray a person reluctant to go to war and unwilling to use the guerrilla tactics that might ensure a speedy victory. His refusal to retreat when the battle turned against him demonstrates his military courage, but his willingness to release his supporters shows that he does not regard victory at any price as an acceptable choice. A final vignette should be noted, not for its inherent historical value, but simply because it so deftly demonstrates what a small detail can reveal about the human person. One day, as Muḥammad was preaching in the mosque of Medina, he kept trying to clear his throat of phlegm. He apparently suffered from certain speech problems, which such a situation could only have exacerbated. In any event, on this occasion, after several unsuccessful attempts, he finally freed his throat, threw back his head, and expectorated on the mosque ceiling.

In addition to the skillful character delineation that Ṭabarī presents within these pages, mention must be made of the critical role that exchange of correspondence occupies within the primary episodes of this section. The most important of these, the letters that al-Manṣūr wrote to Abā Muslim and to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh represent significant statements of caliphal authority and hegemony. In particular, the lengthy exchange between the caliph and Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh charts the principal lines of argumentation for the competing 'Abbāsid and 'Alid claims. In their initial statements the first two of these letters structurally parallel each other, commencing with a Qur'ānic prologue and extending corresponding grants of immunity. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh's response to Abū Ja'far then opens the debate about purity of lineage, a challenge to which the caliph responds with both excoriation and counterclaim.

Finally, it is interesting to mark the manifold roles that women assume within these 231 pages of Ṭabarī's text. The lineage debate just noted focused repeatedly on the relative superiority of female forebears. Foreshadowing the developed argument made

by Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh stands the sharp exchange between al-Manṣūr and ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan in which the latter flaunts his genetic superiority. In addition to these frequently invoked female ancestors, however, there are intriguing glimpses of women in many scenes. Some are the royal wives and consorts who were brought to the caliph's household by capture or contract, such as the women taken in the conquest of Ṭabaristān and the niece of Abū Jaʿfar, Rayṭah bt. Abī al-ʿAbbās. Women close to Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh figure in a number of episodes, as when his mother, Hind, disguises herself in order to visit her imprisoned husband. With the failure of Muḥammad's rebellion, it is his sister Zaynab and his daughter Faṭimah who come forward to claim his body for burial.

ʿAbbāsīd victory is signaled by a woman, as Asmāʾ bt. al-Ḥasan b. ʿAbdallāh orders the black banner flown from the minaret of Medina. Yet more active involvement is credited to Ḥammādah bt. Muʿāwiyah, who is said to have killed her uncle Ismāʿīl b. ʿAbdallāh b. Jaʿfar because his refusal to support Muḥammad's rebellion was jeopardizing the lives of her brothers in their own support for the claimant. The death of Abū al-Qalammas, a staunch defender of Muḥammad, is avenged by the clever trickery of his concubine. Beyond the confines of Muḥammad's action in Medina, there is additional mention of female battle involvement. In a particularly intriguing reference for the year 139, Ṭabarī notes that, when Ṣāliḥ b. ʿAlī fought in that year's summer campaign against the Byzantines, he was accompanied by his sisters, Umm ʿĪsā and Lubābah, "for they had vowed that if the Umayyad reign came to an end they would fight 'in the path of God.'"

Female companionship is also negatively assessed, at least by implication. During the period of hostilities surrounding ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAlī, one soldier lost his life when he took the risk of slipping into town to visit a slave girl. As noted above, caliphal celibacy during the engagement with Muḥammad is contrasted with the latter's continuing access to accompanying concubines. A sense of negativity or ambivalence also surrounds the pejorative reference to al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan as a woman in *ʿiddah* and to the mysterious appearance of jinn in female form. But disguised appearances are not limited to females, whether human or jinn. In one of the more vivid accounts that Ṭabarī presents of the

intensive search mounted for Muḥammad b. ʿAbdallāh b. Riyāḥ b. ʿUthmān there occurs a surprising episode. When Riyāḥ happened upon him unexpectedly, Muḥammad quickly threw his cloak over his face and feigned a feminine posture. Despite his size, he was sufficiently convincing as a female impersonator to prompt Riyāḥ's polite withdrawal. In that moment, at least, Muḥammad was saved by a woman.

This volume of Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh* translates pages 88–319 of the Tertia series of the Leiden edition. That edition, which Brill issued between 1879 and 1898 in three parallel series of fascicles, was prepared under the general direction of M. J. de Goeje. The printed text for the entire first section of the Tertia series (3/1:1–459) was established by M. Th. Houtsma, who assumed the task from Max Grünert. Houtsma worked from a manuscript in Berlin (ms. orient. fol. 69, siglum B), whose orthographic peculiarities were described in the Leiden introduction by M. I. Guidi, and from one in Algiers (no. 594), of which de Goeje offered a description. Sections of the Leiden pp. 102–9 and 186–89 are missing in this latter manuscript, omissions that Houtsma signaled in the critical apparatus of his text. The more recent Cairo edition, prepared by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm, with some additions to the Leiden manuscript base, incorporates the Leiden pagination, as well as extensive use of punctuation, paragraph division, and additional subheadings.

The sources upon which Ṭabarī relied in preparing this segment of ʿAbbāsīd history vary from its earlier to its later sections. From the year 136 until 143 he most frequently cites the noted historian ʿAlī b. Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (d. 235/850) but also includes such various informants as the author of *Kitāb al-maghāzī*, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidi (d. 207/823), and al-Manṣūr's secretary/vizier Abū Ayyūb al-Mūriyānī (d. 154/770–71). For a number of these years, however, no specific authorities are mentioned for events that Ṭabarī notes in brief.

As indicated above, Ṭabarī has focused primary attention in his coverage of the early years of al-Manṣūr's caliphate on the Ḥasanid rebellions mounted by the two sons of ʿAbdallāh b. al-Ḥasan, Muḥammad and Ibrāhīm, in Medina and al-Baṣrah respectively. Abū Zayd ʿUmar b. Shabbah al-Numayrī (d. 264/877), Ṭabarī's senior by some fifty years, serves as his principal source

for this material. Not surprisingly, 'Umar b. Shabbah is credited with a book entitled *Kitāb akhbār Muḥammad wa-Ibrāhīm ib-nay 'Abdallāh b. al-Ḥasan b. al-Ḥasan al-Hāshimī al-Qurashī*, which is also quoted extensively in *Maqātil al-ṭālibiyyīn* by Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, (d. 356/967). A source-critical analysis of 'Umar b. Shabbah's work on the Hasanid rebellion was published about twenty years ago by Tilman Nagel.¹

Ṭabarī supplemented Abū Zayd's work, however, with significant use of eyewitness accounts, some of them secured from direct lineal descendants of those most closely involved with the insurgency. Because Ṭabarī was born about seventy-five years after these events, about the interval of a child born today from the time of World War I, it is not surprising that he had access to such material and the multiple perspectives that it provided.

In this translation I have attempted to follow the Arabic text with fidelity and precision but also to render that text in a manner pleasing and accessible to the English-speaking reader. Many pronominal referents have therefore been expressed more fully, and translations of the ubiquitous *qāla* (he said) have been varied in an effort to capture the tenor of the statement or response. Where necessary, interpolated words or phrases, enclosed in square brackets, have been added to the translation to provide clarification of the intended meaning. I have also tried to identify all personal and place names through reference to the standard bio/bibliographical and geographical sources. Inevitably some names that are cited only once in the *Ta'rikh* eluded identification. Titles of primary and secondary sources cited more than once have been abbreviated in the footnotes but given fully in the bibliography. Technical terms have been offered in translation with an accompanying annotation of the Arabic original, and allusions to earlier events in Islamic and pre-Islamic history have been specified where significant.

My work on this text was supported by an award from the University Research Committee of Emory University and by grants

1. "Ein früher Bericht über den Augstand von Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh im Jahre 145 h," *Der Islam* XLVI (1970), 227–62. See also S. Günther, *Quellenuntersuchungen*.

from the Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, and from the National Endowment for the Humanities. To these organizations I express grateful appreciation. I would also like to thank Professor C. E. Bosworth, a member of the Editorial Board of the Ṭabarī Translation Project, for his review of the completed manuscript and Dr. Estelle Whelan, Editorial Coordinator of the Project, for her assistance and guidance.

Jane Dammen McAuliffe

Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī
Volume XXIX
Translated by Hugh Kennedy

This volume opens when the caliph al-Manṣūr has just defeated the rebellion of Muḥammad the Pure Soul in 145/762-3 and is now securely established in power. The main concerns of the remaining thirteen years of his reign are the building of his new capital at Baghdad, on which al-Ṭabarī's text contains details not previously published in English, and his efforts to have his nephew 'Isā b. Mūsā replaced as heir apparent by his own son Muḥammad al-Mahdī, a maneuver that required all his political skills.

The circumstances of al-Manṣūr's death in 158/775 are described in vivid detail, and this section is followed by a series of anecdotes, some serious, some humorous, most vivid and lively, that illustrate his character and habits.

The last section of the volume describes the reign of al-Mahdī, more pious than his father but also more liberal and open-handed. Along with routine administration, space is devoted to the bizarre intrigues that accompanied the rise and fall of the vizier Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd and the mysterious circumstances of the caliph's own death in 169/785, followed by a short collection of character stories. In addition, the volume also contains important information about warfare on the Byzantine frontier and in Khurāsān.

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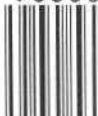
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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXIX

Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī

A.D. 763–786/A.H. 146–169



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME XXIX

Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī

translated and annotated
by

Hugh Kennedy

University of St Andrews

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Beghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Abbreviations



***EI*¹**: *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, first edition
***EI*²**: *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, second edition

Translator's Foreword

This volume is a translation of the part of Ṭabarī's *History* that deals with the period from 145/762 to 169/786. It begins immediately after al-Manṣūr's defeat of the 'Alid rebellion of Muḥammad the Pure Soul and his brother Ibrāhīm and deals with the rest of al-Manṣūr's reign until his death in 158/775. Much of the material is simply administrative detail, government appointments, and the travels of the caliph, but two important subjects are dealt with: the foundation of Baghdad, on which Ṭabarī provides some valuable information to supplement the well-known accounts of the geographers, and the caliph's efforts to force 'Īsā b. Mūsā to renounce his right to the caliphate in favor of his own son al-Mahdī. Much of the anecdotal material here reveals the caliph in a distinctly unfavorable light. The climax of this section is the extraordinarily detailed and vivid account of al-Manṣūr's death, plainly showing the awe and fear with which he was regarded.

The next section is a series of anecdotes about his behavior and appearance. These are not arranged in chronological order but read rather as isolated narratives that Ṭabarī could not fit into the main run of the text but felt were too good to miss out. There are some general themes here: the caliph's determination to uphold his authority, the contrast between his frugality and al-Mahdī's easy going generosity, his eloquence and the effectiveness with which he dealt with hecklers in the mosque, and his relations with the wild and unruly Ma'n b. Za'idah. Despite the random nature of much of this material, we get a very clear idea of al-

Maṣṣūr's personality, and even after twelve hundred years he seems a powerful, individual, rounded character. It says much for the immediacy of the narrative that such a lively impression survives.

The third section deals with the reign of his son, al-Mahdī. Compared with the upheavals and struggles of his father's life, al-Mahdī's caliphate was altogether quieter. Much emphasis is laid on his pious works, his building of mosques, his encouragement of the holy war against the Byzantines, and his persecution of the Manichaean Zindiqs. We are also given detailed accounts of government appointments. The major political events were, once again, the removal of ʿĪsā b. Mūsā from his position in the succession in favor of al-Mahdī's own son al-Hādī and the meteoric rise and sudden fall of the vizier Ya'qūb b. Dāwūd, who was originally appointed as the caliph's intermediary with the ʿAlid family but who went on to become his all-powerful minister. This section also ends with an account of the caliph's death and sundry anecdotes about his behavior. Unlike the accounts of al-Maṣṣūr's death, which are generally consistent, these accounts are directly contradictory, and it is impossible to decide which if any is true. From the point of view of assessing the accuracy of Ṭabarī's work as a whole, it is interesting to note that it is not only in the earlier parts on the life of the Prophet and the early caliphs that such contradictory accounts survive side by side but even of events that took place well after the establishment of the ʿAbbāsids and within the lifetimes of such authorities as al-Wāqidi and al-Madāʾini.

In terms of literary approach, the early ʿAbbāsīd parts of the history are transitional between the *akhbār* narratives of the early parts and the more linear official narratives of the third century. The use of classical Muslim historiographical technique, the individual *akhbār*, each supported by its own *isnād*, becomes much less common after the death of al-Saffāh in 136/754, and much more of the material is unattributed or consists of no more than laconic notes about appointments and dismissals. The latest major work that seems to have used the classical canons was ʿUmar b. Shabbah's account of the rebellion of Muḥammad the Pure Soul, which finishes immediately before the beginning of the section translated here. Those narratives, still large in number, that are

attributed are often attached to isolated individuals, many of whom contribute no more than one or two accounts and few of whom are known to have composed books. Many of them are eyewitnesses or sons of eyewitnesses, and it is quite unclear in what form these accounts reached Ṭabarī more than a century later. The established compilers like al-Madā'inī and al-Wāqidi are relied on for points of detail, rather than substantial narratives.

Of the sources that can be identified, many are closely linked to Baghdad and the caliphal court and bureaucracy, like the Qurashī 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Nawfalī, whose father was an important courtier and Yahya b. al-Ḥasan b. 'Abd al-Khāliq, a relative of the ubiquitous chamberlain al-Rabī' b. Yūnus. This means that we have very little information from provincial sources. There are virtually no extended narratives dealing with Syria or Egypt. Even Khurāsān, which looms so large in earlier parts of the *History*, is largely neglected. Historical writing, like politics and administration, was becoming more centralized in the 'Abbāsīd period.

At their best, the accounts collected by Ṭabarī and translated here are interesting and lively; at their worst they are obscure and monotonous. But whatever their literary merit, there can be no doubt that they form by far the most important historical source for the early 'Abbāsīd caliphate.

It remains a pleasure to thank those who have helped me in the preparation of his translation and generously given of their time, patience, and erudition: Dr. David Jackson and Richard Kimber of the Department of Arabic Studies in the University of St Andrews and especially Judy Ahola, whose aid and encouragement were invaluable. I must also express my thanks to Dr. E. Whelan of the Ṭabarī project for her help. Most of all, I would like to thank Professor Ihsan Abbas, whose patient editing of my typescript and immense knowledge of classical Arabic literature notably improved the readability of the text and saved me from numerous errors. Such mistakes as may remain are, of course, entirely my responsibility.

Hugh Kennedy

The 'Abbāsid Caliphate in Equilibrium
Volume XXX
Translated and annotated by C. E. Bosworth

This volume of al-Ṭabarī's *History* covers nearly a quarter of a century, and after covering the very brief caliphate of al-Hādī, concentrates on that of Hārūn al-Rashīd. During these years, the caliphate was in a state of balance with its external foes; the great enemy, Christian Byzantium, was regarded with respect by the Muslims, and the two great powers of the Near East treated each other essentially as equals, while the Caucasian and Central Asian frontiers were held against pressure from the Turkish peoples of Inner Eurasia. The main stresses were internal, including Shī'ite risings on behalf of the excluded house of 'Alī, and revolts by the radical equalitarian Khārijites; but none of these was serious enough to affect the basic stability of the caliphate.

Hārūn al-Rashīd's caliphate has acquired in the West, under the influence of a misleading picture from the *Arabian Nights*, a glowing image as a golden age of Islamic culture and letters stemming from the Caliph's patronage of the exponents of these arts and sciences. In light of the picture of the Caliph which emerges from al-Ṭabarī's pages, however, this image seems to be distinctly exaggerated. Al-Rashīd himself does not exhibit any notable signs of administrative competence, military leadership or intellectual interests beyond those which convention demanded of a ruler. For much of his reign, he left the business of government to the capable viziers of the Barmakīd family—the account of whose spectacular fall from power forms one of the most dramatic features of al-Ṭabarī's narrative here—and his decision to divide the Islamic empire after his death between his sons was to lead subsequently to a disastrous civil war. Nevertheless, al-Ṭabarī's story is full of interesting sidelights on the lives of those involved in the court circle of the time and on the motivations which impelled medieval Muslims to seek precarious careers there.

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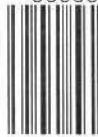
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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXX

The 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium

THE CALIPHATES OF MŪSĀ AL-HĀDĪ AND HĀRŪN AL-RASHĪD

A.D. 785-809/A.H. 169-193



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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXX

**The 'Abbāsid Caliphate
in Equilibrium**

translated and annotated
by

C. E. Bosworth

The University of Manchester

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS [*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*] by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the

chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, according to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translators.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Abbreviations

AKAk. Berlin: Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussische Akademie zu Berlin

BGA: Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum

EHR: *English Historical Review*

EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, first edition

EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition

Elr: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*

GAL: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*

GMS: Gibb Memorial Series

IC: *Islamic Culture*

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

Isl.: *Der Islam*

JA: *Journal Asiatique*

JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*

JNES: *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

JRASB: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal*

JSAl: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*

R.Afr.: *Revue Africaine*

RCAL: *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*

REI: *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*

RSO: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*

SI: *Studia Islamica*

WbKAS: *Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache*

WZKM: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*

ZDMG: *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*

In citations from the Qur'ān, where two different numbers are given from a verse, the first is that of Flügel's text and the second that of the official Egyptian edition.

Translator's Foreword

The section of Ṭabarī's history devoted to the reigns of Mūsā al-Hādī and his brother Hārūn al-Rashīd spans twenty-four years, al-Hādī's caliphate lasting for only fifteen months of these, at the most. The historical events dealt with by the chronicler are located in a wide expanse of territory embracing most of the still largely united caliphate (although Muslim Spain had of course never acknowledged the 'Abbāsids from the outset, and Ṭabarī takes no cognizance of happenings there), from Morocco in the west to Transoxania in the east.

The 'Alids and their Shī'ī supporters, despite having been the beneficiaries of a comparatively conciliatory policy toward them by the previous Caliph al-Mahdī, remained basically unreconciled to 'Abbāsid rule and the deflection of the caliphate-imamate, as they saw it, from the Prophet's direct descendants, the offspring of 'Alī and Fāṭimah, to those of the mere paternal uncle of Muḥammad, al-'Abbās. Something of the polemical battles of the early 'Abbāsid period, fought on the literary plane by the poets who lent their support to the 'Abbāsids and 'Alids, respectively, emerges in our section of Ṭabarī's history from the verse of the 'Abbāsid court poet Marwān b. Abī Ḥaṣṣah cited at III, 743 (below, 308).

The struggles of these opposing parties were, however, by no means literary only. The episode which dominates Ṭabarī's account of al-Hādī's reign is that of the 'Alid rising in Medina and then Mecca of the Ḥasanid al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī b. Ḥasan, which ended with the latter's death in battle at Fakhkh in 169 (786); one result of the scattering of the 'Alids after this débâcle was the

eventual foundation of the Idrīsīd state in Morocco by the fugitive Idrīs b. 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan, involving the first subtraction of a province, albeit a very distant one, from the 'Abbāsids' orbit. In al-Rashīd's reign, the rising of the Ḥasanīd Yaḥyā b. 'Abdallāh b. Ḥasan in Daylam and northwestern Persia in 176 (792), brought to an end through the military and diplomatic skills of the Barmakī al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā, is treated only briefly by Ṭabarī; but the chronicler adds much anecdotal material on Yaḥyā's subsequent tribulations and death at the Caliph's hands.

Thereafter, al-Rashīd's uncompromising maintenance of Sunni orthodoxy seems to have dampened further Shī'ī efforts. Yet Iraq and al-Jazīrah continued all through his reign to be troubled by the sectarian activities of the Khārijites among the Arabs there, apparently affecting the countryside rather than the towns but requiring punitive expeditions to be sent out from the capital. Syria, with its endemic tribal factionalism going back to Umayyad times, remained a potential focus for disaffection against the Iraq-centered 'Abbāsids. Fears of the possible use of Syria as a power base by the 'Abbāsīd prince 'Abd al-Malik b. Ṣāliḥ, himself with maternal connections with the Umayyads and governor in Syria for several years like his brother and father before him, may have lain behind al-Rashīd's arrest and imprisonment of his great-uncle in 187 (803); and the Caliph's virtual abandonment of Baghdad as the effective capital and his move in 180 (796) to al-Raqqah may have been motivated not only by a desire to be near the military front with Byzantium, as Kennedy has suggested,¹ but also by a need to keep an eye on Syria. Egypt was in these years not so much chafing under 'Abbāsīd domination specifically as it was disaffected through the fiscal policies of the 'Abbāsīd governors, which provoked unrest among both the Copts and the Bedouins of the Nile delta, whilst similar oppression by a caliphal governor in the Yemen resulted in a prolonged revolt of the Yemenis.

On the northern frontier of the caliphate, a state of rough equilibrium with the Byzantines seems to have been reached by al-Rashīd's time. The period of transition from rule by the Isaurian dynasty in the Empire to that of the Amorīan dynasty was a

1. H. Kennedy, *The early Abbasid caliphate*, 120.

troubled one, with upheavals in the state caused by the Empress Irene's seizure of sole power in 797 and her deposition five years later by Nicephorus I; and this should have enabled al-Rashid—highly conscious of his image as the great Ghāzī-Caliph—to intensify military pressure in the region of the *thughūr*; in fact, the annual Arab raids and the Greek counterattacks resulted in no extensive or permanent transfers of territory at this time. Potentially very serious, but stemmed by the energetic measures of the general Yazīd b. Mazyad (whose family was later to establish a power base in the region as the Yazīdī line of Sharwān-Shāhs), was the invasion of Armenia and Arrān through the Caucasus in 183 (799–800) by the Khazar Turks.

Affairs in the eastern parts of the caliphate were in the early years of al-Rashid's caliphate the responsibility of al-Faḍl b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, who from 178 (794) onward continued the earlier Arab policy of expansion into the pagan steppes of Central Asia, himself raiding as far as the Syr Darya valley and despatching one of his commanders into what is now eastern Afghanistan; he also recruited fresh contingents of local Iranian troops from Khurāsān and Transoxania in order to stiffen and to supplement the 'Abbāsids' original backing of Khurāsānian guards, the *Abnā' al-Dawlah*. But with the recall of al-Faḍl to Baghdad and then the fall of the Barmakis, Khurāsān came under the governorship of 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Māhān, whose financial exactions there rendered the province discontented and ready to support the revolt raised at Samarqand in 190 (806), with Turkish support from the steppes, by Rāfi' b. Layth b. Naṣr b. Sayyār. Only the belated decision of the Caliph to dismiss his very profitable servant (from the viewpoint of revenue-raising) 'Alī b. 'Īsā led Rāfi' to submit to al-Ma'mūn "because of his just conduct" in 193 (809), when al-Rashid himself was actually dead.

Al-Rashid's dealings with 'Alī b. 'Īsā and his despatch of his mawlā Harthamah b. A'yan as replacement governor in Khurāsān and as restorer of order there are narrated in considerable detail by Ṭabarī, but the most extensive treatment accorded by him to a single episode is of course with regard to the fall of the Barmakī family of secretaries and viziers in 187 (803). These dramatic events excited the shocked wonder and the pity of contemporaries, and continued thereafter to intrigue mediaeval Muslims, who

came to weave around them imaginative, even semilegendary embroideries. Living as they did in a society where abrupt changes of fortune were far from uncommon, these Muslims came to view the Barmakis' fate as the supreme *'ibrah* or warning example of pride and riches brought low at one stroke. Yet such embroideries, designed to amplify and to explain for contemporaries what was not easily explicable, should not surprise; for it is not completely clear today precisely what tangled motives lay behind al-Rashīd's actions, beyond the obvious one of humbling subjects who had grown overmighty.²

The reign of al-Hādī is really too short for us to arrive at a completely balanced estimate of his character as ruler, and we do not have enough material for us to follow Von Kremer in stigmatizing al-Hādī as "the Arabic Nero."³ But he does emerge as a capricious, unreliable person whom it was dangerous to oppose or thwart, with a distinct streak of violence and cruelty, as his indiscriminate striking of passersby when once at ʿĪsābādh and his killing of the two lesbian slave girls indicate.⁴

For al-Rashīd, we have a much ampler documentation in both the historical and the *adab* sources. The popular image of the despotic but bluff and genial monarch, patron of poetry and the arts, under whom Baghdad became a city of luxury and *douceur de vie* unparalleled in the previous history of the Islamic world, was fostered in the West from the eighteenth century onward under the seductive but delusory depiction of life there in the *Thousand and One Nights*. The materials for the art of biography as we know it in the West today are generally meager in the premodern Islamic sources, and the real mainsprings of al-Rashīd's character will probably remain as obscure to us as those of most leading figures in early Islam. Yet this image of "good old Hārūn al-Rashīd" has been potent enough to have spawned several popular books on the

2. See the discussions of the causes of the fall of the Barmakis, so far as they are discernible, in D. Sourdel, *Le vizirat 'abbāside*, I, 156–8, and Kennedy, 127–9; and for further secondary sources, below, 201, n. 697.

3. See F.-C. Muth, *Die Annalen von at-Tabarī im Spiegel der europäischen Bearbeitungen*, 99, and also S. Moscati, *Le califat d'al-Hādī*, 24–8, for an estimate of the Caliph's personality.

4. Tabarī, III, 586, 590 (below, 67, 72–73).

Caliph and his age, such as E. H. Palmer's *Haroun Alraschid, Caliph of Baghdad* (London and Belfast, 1881), H. St. J. B. Philby's *Harun al Rashid* (London, 1933), and Sir John Glubb's *Haroun al Rasheed and the great Abbasids* (London, 1976). At least the first two of these writers were too familiar with the realities of mediaeval Islamic life and with some of the mediaeval Islamic sources to accept unquestioningly the picture of al-Rashid's age as a golden one.⁵ Palmer noted that "hitherto we have found him very unlike the Merry Monarch of the Arabian Nights," and his final verdict was that "as a man, he showed many indications of a loyal and affectionate disposition, but the preposterous position (i.e., as God's vicegerent on earth, with the servility thereby engendered) in which he was placed almost necessarily crushed all really human feelings in him. . . . That such a man should not be spoilt, that such absolute despotism should not lead to acts of arbitrary injustice, that such unlimited power and absence of all feelings of responsibility could be possessed without unlimited indulgence, was not in the nature of human events."⁶ Philby asserted that "the reigns of Harun and his son Mamun stand out conspicuously against the dark background of the world's ignorance as beacons welcoming the rebirth of the arts and sciences after their long eclipse," but he readily conceded that "in surveying the circumstances of Harun's Califate we seem to be assisting at the spectacle of a heart beating fast and furiously in a paroxysm of fever which was reducing the body of an empire to the extremes of sickness and misery. The shadows of future decay were thrown forward on to the screen of history by the brilliant kaleidoscope of a puppet-show, which dazzled its beholders at the time and has blinded posterity—thanks to the unholy alliance of the historian and the

5. The only primary sources which Palmer mentions specifically in his book are Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī's *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and "El Amraniy" (99, 154) (this last author being presumably Muḥammad b. 'Alī, Ibn al-'Imrānī, whose history *al-Inbā' fī ta'rīkh al-khulafā'* has recently been edited and published by Qasim al-Samarrai, Leiden, 1973, an author whom Palmer could have cited from Ibn al-Tiqtāqā's *Kitāb al-Fakhri*), but, of course, the printed texts of Ibn al-Athīr and of the Persian abridgment of Ṭabari by Bal'amī would have been available to him at that time. I have not seen Glubb's book, but the semipopular book of 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Jūmard, *Hārūn al-Rashīd, dirāsah ta'rīkhīyyah ijtīmā'īyyah siyāsiyyah*, 2 parts (Beirut, 1956), adds nothing to what is already known.

6. *Haroun Alraschid*, 138, 222–3.

storyteller—to the emptiness of a limelit scene of splendour surrounded by the murky night of wailing and gnashing of teeth.”⁷

Certainly, al-Rashīd does not stand out in either personal character or executive competence above others of the early ‘Abbāsīd Caliphs. His extravagant gifts to poets, singers, popular preachers, ascetics, and so forth, were merely what was expected of a ruler, and one should always recall that somewhere in the caliphal lands someone—whether a fellah in the Nile valley, a merchant in Baghdad, or an artisan in Nishapur—was paying for all such manifestations of royal conspicuous consumption. Ṭabarī notes that al-Rashīd’s intellectual horizons were narrow and that he had no taste for disputation and argumentation such as his son al-Ma’mūn was to encourage at his court.⁸ In the early years of his caliphate he was content to leave much of the burden of administration to the Barmakīs, and then subsequently to mawlās like al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī’ and Ismā’il b. Ṣubayḥ al-Ḥarrānī. The decision, embodied in the “Meccan documents” of 186–7 (802–3), to arrange in his own lifetime a division of the empire between his sons al-Amin and al-Ma’mūn (with belated provision for a third son, al-Qāsim al-Mu’taman) undeniably seems, with the hindsight of our knowledge of the Civil War which ensued after al-Rashīd’s death, to have been an unwise one, as some contemporaries averred at the time.⁹ But Kennedy may be right in seeing the Caliph’s move as an attempt, unfortunately unsuccessful but worth trying, to resolve some of the tensions and ambitions rife within the ruling groups of the state by providing for these groups defined sectors of power in the caliphate.¹⁰ Finally, one may note that al-Rashīd’s mode of executing the captured brother of Rāfi’ b. Layth, Bashīr,¹¹ shows a refinement of cruelty, even of sadism, which the fact of the Caliph’s being racked with incessant pain from his incurable internal malady at that time cannot wholly excuse.

For his historical information and for his anecdotes on the Caliphs’ lifestyles, Ṭabarī relied on reports going back to leading

7. *Harun al Rashid*, 60, 75–6.

8. III, 741 (below, 306).

9. Ṭabarī, III, 653–4 (below, 181–82).

10. Kennedy, 124–6.

11. Ṭabarī, III, 734–5 (below, 298).

historians such as Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī and Wāqidī, and on reports from noted *adibs* and philologists like Ishāq al-Mawṣilī and al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī, as well as on information from *rāwīs* who are quite obscure to us. The interval of only a century or less between the events in question and Ṭabarī's writing his history meant that he was able to draw on a great fund of family tradition preserved by the direct descendants of the protagonists in these events, such as al-Hādī's own great-grandson Hārūn b. Muḥammad b. Ismā'il.¹² Ṭabarī also gives in this section the texts *in extenso* of numerous official documents, including among others the encomia on the accession of al-Rashīd by the secretary Yūsuf b. al-Qāsim (III, 600–1; below, 93–94) and by Ja'far b. Yaḥyā al-Barmakī in gratitude for his appointment as governor of Syria in 180 (796–7) (III, 642–4; below, 159–62), al-Rashīd's letter of dismissal in 191 (806–7) to 'Alī b. 'Isā and the letter of appointment of 'Alī's successor in Khurāsān, Harthamah b. A'yan (III, 716–18; below, 273–75); but above all, that of the "Meccan documents," the stipulations by which the two princes al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn bound themselves to their father's arrangements, and the letter to the provincial governors announcing these measures (III, 654–66; below, 183–99). These documents are not yet couched in so florid a style, made up of balanced, assonantal [*musajja'*] phrases as was to become standard in Islamic chanceries after circa 900, but their at times tortuous syntax poses problems for the translator, especially where the reconstructed Arabic text is by no means certain; an Arabist of the caliber of F. Gabrieli has confessed, on the occasion of his essaying the task of translating the "Meccan documents" and other similar documents of the period, that the precious style of such texts makes absolute certainty in translation impossible.¹³

For a considerable part of Ṭabarī's account of al-Ma'mūn's caliphate, we have extant Ṭabarī's verbatim source, Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's *Kitāb Baghdād*, but for the reigns of al-Hādī and al-Rashīd, we possess no such controlling parallel text. The editor of this section of the text of Ṭabarī's history, Stanislas Guyard, could only have recourse to later, epitomizing historians—like the anonymous author of the *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-al-ḥadā'iq*, Ibn al-Jawzī

12. Ṭabarī, III, 581 (see below, 60), 1148.

13. See below, 191, n. 686.

in his *Muntaẓam* and Ibn al-Athīr in his *Kāmil*—for supplementing the two manuscripts of Ṭabarī on which he had to rely for this section; namely, the Istanbul one, Köprülü 1041 (ms. C) copied in 651 (1253), which covers the whole of this particular section; and the Algiers one, 594 (ms. A) copied in the Maghrib, which contains, however, four lacunae in our section, two of substantial length, and which ends abruptly at III, 755 of the printed text, after which point the text depends on the unicum C. A Berlin fragment, Petermann II, 635 (ms. Pet) served as a third manuscript for a mere four and a half pages of the printed text.¹⁴ Thus, Guyard's task was far from easy, and he had perforce to leave certain cryptic passages unresolved; unless fresh manuscripts or hitherto unknown parallel sources turn up, it does not seem possible for the state of the text to be improved.

The pleasant task of thanking those who have given advice and help over the translation is the sole remaining one. I am particularly grateful to the late Dr. Martin Hinds (Cambridge), Dr. Patricia Crone (Oxford), and Professor Yūsuf 'Izz al-Dīn (al-'Ayn, U.A.E.) for help with the text; and to Professors Ch. Pellat (Sorbonne) and R. Sellheim (Frankfort) for their efforts at identifying some of the more obscure poets cited in this section. But since all human endeavors are susceptible to the onslaughts of the *'ayn al-kamāl*, for the imperfections of this translation I alone am responsible.

C. E. Bosworth

14. See *Introductio*, p. LXV.

The War between Brothers
Volume XXXI
Translated by Michael Fishbein

This section of the *History of al-Ṭabarī* covers the caliphate of Muhammad al-Amīn, who succeeded his father, Hārūn al-Rashīd on March 24, 809, and was killed on September 25, 813.

The focus of this section is a single event, the civil war between al-Amīn and his half-brother al-Ma'mūn. Before his death, al-Rashīd had arranged for the succession in a series of documents signed at Mecca and deposited for safekeeping in the Ka'bah. Al-Amīn was to become caliph; al-Ma'mūn was to govern Khurāsān with virtual autonomy from Baghdad. Al-Amīn could neither remove his brother from office nor interfere with his revenues or military support. Furthermore, al-Ma'mūn was named as al-Amīn's successor, and al-Amīn was forbidden to alter the succession. If either brother violated these conditions, he was to forfeit his rights.

It soon became apparent that the good will to carry out these arrangements did not exist. Disagreement broke out when al-Amīn insisted that many of the forces that had accompanied al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn to Khurāsān return to Baghdad. When the majority of army commanders obeyed the new caliph's orders, al-Ma'mūn was enraged and countered with measures to secure his position. Angry letters were exchanged, with al-Amīn pressing his brother to make concessions that al-Ma'mūn regarded as contrary to the succession agreement. By March 811, military conflict was imminent. Al-Amīn demanded that certain border districts be returned to the control of Baghdad. When al-Ma'mūn refused, al-Amīn despatched an expedition to seize the districts.

Al-Amīn's resort to force ended in disaster. Al-Ma'mūn's forces, led by Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn and Harthamah b. A'yan, quickly closed in on Baghdad. In a siege lasting over a year, Baghdad suffered extensive damage from the fighting and from bombardment by siege engines. Gangs of vagrants and paupers, organized by al-Amīn into irregular units, fought a kind of urban guerrilla war. But, with Ṭāhir and Harthamah enforcing the siege and with most of al-Amīn's associates having switched their loyalties to the winning side, the caliph was forced to sue for terms. These were worked out among representatives of al-Amīn, Ṭāhir, and Harthamah. However, when the caliph boarded the boat that was to take him into Harthamah's custody, troops loyal to Ṭāhir assaulted and capsized the boat. Al-Amīn fell into the Tigris, was apprehended, and was executed that night on orders from Ṭāhir. Thus ended this phase of the civil war. Al-Ma'mūn was now caliph.

Al-Ṭabarī's history of these years includes accounts by participants in the event, diplomatic letters between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn, Ṭāhir's long letter to al-Ma'mūn on the circumstances of al-Amīn's death, and a dramatic eyewitness account of al-Amīn's last hours. Also noteworthy is a 135-verse poem describing the devastation of Baghdad. The section ends with a series of literary anecdotes on the character of al-Amīn.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXI

The War between Brothers

THE CALIPHATE OF MUḤAMMAD AL-AMĪN

A.D. 809–813/A.H. 193–198



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXXI

The War between Brothers

translated and annotated
by

Michael Fishbein

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Preface



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chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

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For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Abbreviations



*EI*¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st edition. Leiden, 1913–42

*EI*²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition. Leiden, 1960–

GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*

IJMES: *International Journal of Middle East Studies*

JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*

RCAL: *Rendiconti della Reale Accademia dei Lincei*

REA: E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*

RSO: *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*

Translator's Foreword

This section of the *History* of al-Ṭabarī covers the four and one-half year reign of Muḥammad al-Amīn, who succeeded to the caliphate upon the death of his father, Hārūn al-Rashīd, on 3 Jumādā II 193 (March 24, 809), and who was killed on 28 Muḥarram 198 (September 25, 813).

A single event, the conflict and eventual civil war between al-Amīn and his half brother al-Ma'mūn, the governor of Khurāsān province, absorbs the attention of al-Ṭabarī for these years. Before his death al-Rashīd had formalized arrangements for the succession in a series of documents signed at Mecca and deposited for safekeeping in the Ka'bah in the last month of A.H. 186 (December 802) and reaffirmed, with certain additions, some two years later.¹ Under these arrangements, al-Amīn was to succeed to the caliphate; his brother, al-Ma'mūn, was to receive the governorship of the eastern province of Khurāsān, with virtual autonomy from Baghdad. Al-Amīn was not to interfere in any way with the administration of his brother's province. He could neither remove his brother from office nor interfere in any way with his revenues or military support. Furthermore, al-Ma'mūn was named as al-Amīn's successor; al-Amīn was explicitly forbidden to alter the succession. The succession after al-Ma'mūn was fixed in al-Qāsim, a third son of al-Rashīd, although al-Ma'mūn was given the right on his succession to

1. For details of the documents, see Ṭabarī, III, 651-67.

replace al-Qāsim with someone else, if he wished. If either brother violated these conditions, he was to forfeit his rights. These arrangements constituted an unprecedented restriction on a ruling caliph's authority, and although the brothers freely agreed to them, it was obvious that they could be made to work only with the good will of both sides.

It quickly became apparent that such good will did not exist. Trust between the two elder brothers broke down even before the death of al-Rashīd. According to a notice for A.H. 192 (807-8), one year before the death of al-Rashīd, al-Ma'mūn already suspected that his brother would try to eliminate him on accession to the caliphate.² He therefore asked to be allowed to accompany al-Rashīd on an expedition to Khurāsān so as not to be in Baghdad and under his brother's control if the already ailing al-Rashīd should die. Al-Rashīd vacillated but eventually granted the request; the chronicle does not make explicit the extent to which he was aware of the mistrust between the two heirs. While on the expedition, al-Rashīd took a step that exacerbated the tension by assigning to al-Ma'mūn the entire army that constituted the expeditionary force. By implying that al-Ma'mūn would have at his permanent disposal a large part of the regular army from Baghdad, in addition to the forces he could raise in his governorate of Khurāsān, al-Rashīd disturbed the military balance that would exist on the accession of al-Amin. We can deduce that al-Amin never accepted that this extraordinary arrangement was implied by the terms of succession to which he had agreed. In a letter drafted seven or eight months before al-Rashīd's death and sent to a younger brother, Šālih, who had also accompanied the expedition to Khurāsān, with instructions that it be delivered only on the death of al-Rashīd, al-Amin gave orders that the regular Iraqi troops should return to Baghdad immediately on al-Amin's succession, under the command of al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī', al-Amin's most trusted adviser. The secrecy about the letter may imply fear on al-Amin's part that al-Rashīd might contravene its content if it became known to him before his death.

2. See Ṭabarī, III, 730-31.

Thus, on the death of al-Rashid the situation already contained the germs of conflict. Al-Rashid's instructions notwithstanding, the majority of army commanders on the Khurāsān expedition decided to obey the new caliph's orders to return to Baghdad. Al-Ma'mūn was enraged. His first impulse was to use force to prevent the desertion of troops he regarded as under his command, but his chief adviser, al-Faḍl b. Sahl, warned him that his remaining forces were inferior to the task. At the same time, al-Faḍl instructed al-Ma'mūn to work to strengthen his power base in Khurāsān, with a view toward eventually replacing al-Amīn as caliph.

After the account of the episode of the return of the army to Baghdad, al-Ṭabarī's chronicle presents an exchange of letters between the two brothers. Al-Amīn pressed his brother to make a number of concessions that al-Ma'mūn regarded as contrary to the terms of the succession agreement. As there are several accounts of these letters and embassies, the sequence of demands is not always clear. Apparently al-Amīn at first merely requested that al-Ma'mūn allow al-Amīn's infant son, Mūsā, to be added to the order of succession after al-Ma'mūn and al-Qāsim. Al-Ma'mūn, whose military situation in Khurāsān already had improved with the surrender of the rebels, rejected the request and at some point stopped sending al-Amīn official reports of events in his province (via the *barīd* or post service, really an official information service linking provincial governors to the central government in Baghdad). Al-Amīn considered this and a number of associated acts as rebellion and had al-Ma'mūn's name removed from the succession. Other moves by al-Amīn included appointing the infant Mūsā nominal governor of Khurāsān, refusing to allow al-Ma'mūn's private fortune and family to leave Iraq, and summoning al-Ma'mūn back to Baghdad.

These maneuvers continued through A.H. 194 (October 809–October 810). By Jumādā II 195 (March 811) military conflict was imminent. Al-Amīn demanded that certain districts over which al-Ma'mūn had been exercising control from Khurāsān but that lay outside the borders of the province, be returned to the control of Baghdad. When al-Ma'mūn refused to comply, al-Amīn gave a former governor of Khurāsān, 'Alī b. 'Isā b.

Māhān, command of 40,000 men and dispatched him with orders to seize the contested district of al-Rayy and then proceed to Khurāsān. He was to arrest al-Ma'mūn and return him to Baghdad in chains.

Al-Amin's attempts to settle the dispute by force ended in military disasters. 'Alī b. 'Isā was killed in battle against al-Ma'mūn's commander at al-Rayy, Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn. (Al-Ma'mūn formally accepted the title of caliph shortly after the victory.) A second expedition from Baghdad, led by 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Jabalah al-Abnāwī, was defeated as well, leaving al-Ma'mūn in possession of all northern Iran. The year A.H. 196 (September 811–September 812) saw al-Amin making desperate attempts to recruit support from the Arab tribes of Iraq and Syria, but these efforts, the product of necessity rather than of any personal rapport with the Bedouin Arabs, came to no avail. An expedition by a mixed army of 20,000 regular troops and 20,000 Bedouins sent to prevent Ṭāhir from taking Ḥulwān, the gateway to Iraq, ended in fiasco when the regulars and Bedouins turned against each other at the instigation of agents provocateurs infiltrated into the army by Ṭāhir. A subsequent effort to raise support for al-Amin in Syria also failed. Even in Baghdad, al-Amin's support seemed to be melting away. A section of the elite Baghdad garrison (the *Abnā'*) backed a pro-Ma'mūn coup by the son of 'Alī b. 'Isā b. Māhān. Al-Amin was deposed and imprisoned for two days in Rajab 196 (April 812), until loyal troops from the garrison quarter of al-Ḥarbiyyah put down the coup and freed the caliph.

By the end of A.H. 196, al-Amin's power was evaporating. After Ṭāhir's victories in northern Iran, al-Ma'mūn, who now considered himself the legitimate caliph because his brother had violated the succession agreement, launched a two-pronged attack on Iraq. While Harthamah b. A'yan advanced over the main road from Ḥulwān into Iraq to approach Baghdad from the east, Ṭāhir turned south toward al-Ahwāz, whose governor died in battle rather than renounce his allegiance to al-Amin. Ṭāhir then turned west, took Wāsiṭ and al-Madā'in, crossed the Tigris, and advanced to Ṣarṣar, only a few miles south of Baghdad.

The siege of Baghdad lasted from 12 Dhū al-Ḥijjah 196 (August 25, 812), when Ṭāhir moved his camp to an open space

outside the gate of al-Ḥarbiyyah suburb, the main seat of the Baghdad garrison, until the death of al-Amin on 25 Muḥarram 198 (September 25, 813). The suburbs that had grown up around the walled city suffered extensive damage from the fighting and from bombardment by siege engines. Al-Amin could still rely on the loyalty of most of the local troops, and he had large resources of money with which to buy the services of soldiers. Some of Ṭahir's troops were tempted and changed sides. Gangs of vagrants and unemployed paupers were organized into irregular units to fight a kind of urban guerrilla war. But, with Ṭahir and Harthamah controlling the approaches to the city and with most of al-Amin's governors in Iraq having prudently switched their loyalties to the winning side, al-Amin finally was forced to attempt an escape or negotiate for terms. It was decided that surrender was the best option. The question was whether to turn to Ṭahir, the obvious choice, as he was in closest proximity to the palace, or to Harthamah, who was across the Tigris on the east bank. The bridges having been cut, the logistics of a surrender to Harthamah were more complicated and would be possible only with the consent of Ṭahir; however, al-Amin insisted on Harthamah, whom he knew and believed he could trust.

Terms for the surrender were worked out in three-way negotiations among representatives of al-Amin, Ṭahir, and Harthamah. Al-Amin was to turn over the insignia of the caliphate to Ṭahir, thereby renouncing his claim to the office. He would then be allowed to proceed to a wharf on the Tigris, where Harthamah would be waiting in a boat to ferry him to safety. The plan was never carried out. What actually happened is not easy to reconstruct. The insignia of the caliphate were never surrendered to Ṭahir—that is virtually certain. One account presents this neglect as a deliberate attempt by al-Amin to circumvent the agreement and escape to Harthamah without abdicating. According to this account, al-Ḥasan al-Hirsh, the leader of the irregular troops that had fought for al-Amin, learned of al-Amin's intention and denounced al-Amin to Ṭahir, who then set up an ambush and frustrated the planned escape. But, according to a second and more detailed account, the failure to hand over the insignia seems not to have been

planned. According to this account, Harthamah's messenger came to al-Amīn at the prearranged time and announced that the boat was at the wharf. Presumably, this was the moment when al-Amīn should have sent the insignia to Ṭāhir so that the guards at the gates of the city, under Ṭāhir's command, would be commanded to allow the caliph to depart. However, Harthamah's messenger added that suspicious activity had been noticed on the shore of the Tigris and that Harthamah recommended postponing the surrender for a day; he would return on the morrow with sufficient forces to defend al-Amīn in the event of an ambush. At this point al-Amīn panicked. Convinced that Ṭāhir intended to storm the palace that night, he insisted on riding to the wharf without delay and with only the smallest of escorts. The insignia, one can deduce from Ṭāhir's subsequent account (though full of half-truths, it seems accurate enough on this point), were taken along, carried not by the caliph but by the eunuch Kawthar, who rode in the rear of the cavalcade. Not having received word of a formal surrender by al-Amīn, Ṭāhir's forces attempted to board the boat. A scuffle ensued, and al-Amīn, who fell or jumped into the Tigris and swam to shore, was apprehended, taken to a house being used by one of Ṭāhir's commanders, and executed that night, almost certainly on orders from Ṭāhir. (Ṭāhir's account of how overzealous soldiers mortally wounded al-Amīn at the moment of his capture must be seen as a self-serving lie.) The next morning, Ṭāhir exposed al-Amīn's head to public view, and the civil war—at least this phase of it—was over.

The vigor of al-Ṭabarī's history of this period will be apparent to the reader. There is extensive use of accounts by participants in the events—al-Faḍl b. Sahl for events at the court of al-Ma'mūn and a number of courtiers in the entourage of al-Amīn. The account of the last hours of al-Amīn's life by Aḥmad b. Sallām ranks as one of the most dramatic pieces of early Arabic historical writing. Many diplomatic letters exchanged between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn are included verbatim, as well as Ṭāhir's long letter to al-Ma'mūn explaining the circumstances of al-Amīn's death—a letter filled with cold self-justification that is all the more shocking following as it does the heartrending eyewitness narrative of the murder of the

caliph. There are long selections from the poetry of the period, both the panegyric and elegy that accompanied all politically significant events and the less formal poetry that commemorated the day-to-day events of the war. A noteworthy inclusion is the 135-verse poem by Abū Ya'qūb al-Khuraymī describing the devastation of Baghdad.

A Note on the Text

The translation follows the text of the Leiden edition, which appeared in installments between 1879 and 1898 under the general editorship of M. J. De Goeje. The French scholar Stanislas Guyard edited the chronicle for the years A.H. 159–218 (III, 459–1163). The text of the section on the caliphate of al-Amin survived in only one manuscript known at the time, Istanbul Ms. Köprülü 1041 (siglum C in the apparatus of the Leiden edition but designated in this section simply as "codex," as it provided the only source of the text). The manuscript was described as "*imperfectum, passim parvas lacunas habens*." Restoration of the text was often very difficult, as can be seen from the *apparatus criticus* of the edition. For help in establishing the text Guyard was able to refer to parallel passages by later historians, who often quoted verbatim from al-Ṭabarī: Ibn al-Athīr's *Kitāb al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rikh*; the anonymous *Kitāb al-'Uyūn wa-al-ḥadā'iq fī akhbār al-ḥaqā'iq* and Miskawayh's *Kitāb Tajārib al-umam wa-ta'āqib al-himam* (both contained in De Goeje's 1869 edition of *Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum*); al-Mas'ūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab*; and Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī's *Mir'āt al-zamān*.

A photographic copy of one additional manuscript containing part of the section translated here became available for the 1960 Cairo edition of Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm—Istanbul Ms. Ahmet III 2929 (siglum *alif*, or A, in the Cairo apparatus). This manuscript allowed Ibrāhīm to fill in some of the small lacunae in the Leiden edition and occasionally preserved a better reading. Unfortunately, the text of the manuscript stops just before the end of A.H. 197 (III, 902, of the Leiden text), so that the remainder of the Cairo text for this section is the same as the Leiden text, apart from minor differences in punctuation and

vocalization. Where my translation follows the Cairo text this is indicated in a footnote.

I have noted where parallel accounts of the events of these years may be found, particularly in the works of al-Ya'qūbī, al-Dīnawarī, al-Iṣbahānī, al-Mas'ūdī, and Ibn al-Athīr, as well as some of the secondary literature available on the period.

The accompanying maps have been reproduced from G. Le Strange's books *The Lands of the Eastern Caliphate* (1905) and *Baghdad during the Abbasid Caliphate* (1900). Unfortunately, they include many features that postdate the caliphate of al-Amin. The reader should therefore use them as an aid to locating the sites of events narrated by al-Ṭabarī, not as a guide to the topography of Baghdad under al-Amin.

I wish to express my thanks to Professors Seeger A. Bonebakker, Michael G. Morony, and Moshe Perlmann of the University of California, Los Angeles; to Professor Everett K. Rowson of the University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Michael L. Bates, Curator of Islamic Coins at the American Numismatic Society; and to Dr. Paul E. Chevedden of Salem State College, Salem, Massachusetts, for their help. For any errors and shortcomings, I alone take responsibility.

Michael Fishbein

The Reunification of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate

Volume XXXII

Translated by C.E. Bosworth

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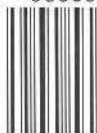
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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXII

The Reunification of the 'Abbāsid Caliphate

THE CALIPHATE OF AL-MA'MŪN

A.D. 813-833 / A.H. 198-218



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(*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa 'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXXII

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translated and annotated
by

C.E. Bosworth

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Preface

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Abbreviations Employed

BCA	<i>Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum</i>
EI ¹	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islām</i> , first edition
EI ²	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islām</i> , new edition
GAS	F. Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i>
GMS	Gibb Memorial Series
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
Isl.	<i>Der Islam</i>
JA	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSOI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
MW	<i>The Muslim World</i>
REI	<i>Revue des Etudes Islamiques</i>
RSO	<i>Rivista degli Studi Orientali</i>
SI	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
WZKM	<i>Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

In citations from the Qur'ān, where two different numbers are given from a verse, the first is that of Flügel's text and the second that of the official Egyptian edition.



Translator's Foreword



The section of Ṭabarī's history devoted to the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn concentrates essentially on events in Iraq and, to a lesser extent, on events in Mecca and the Hijaz insofar as the struggles for political and religious control of the Holy Places were reflections of those going on in the heartland of Iraq. Nevertheless, Ṭabarī was a chronicler of the history of the caliphate as a whole, hence he could not entirely neglect the regions outside Iraq. A fair amount of attention is paid to Egypt, where al-Ma'mūn's governors had to cope with various rebellions of both the local Muslim Arabs and the Copts, and to events in northern Syria, the Jazīrah and the Byzantine marches in eastern Anatolia, which formed the backdrop to the Caliph's last illness and death. But events in the Maghrib beyond Barqah are totally ignored; and the laconic references to Khurasan, Transoxiana and Sind rarely go beyond the noting of changes of governors there.

The main theme of the annalistic narrative of the earlier years of the reign, from al-Ma'mūn's succession to rule over the united empire on al-Amin's death in 198(813) until al-Ma'mūn's decision to come westwards from Marw and establish firmly for the first time his authority in Iraq in 204(819), is of violent conflict in Iraq. At the outset the conflict focused on three contending groups: Abū al-Sarāyā's pro-Shī'ī revolt; the

representatives of al-Ma'mūn's authority there under al-Ḥasan b. Sahl; and the old Arab and Iranian families of Iraq like the Hāshimites and their allies the Khurasanian Abnā' or guards of the first 'Abbāsids, now settled mainly in Baghdad, above all in the Ḥarbiyyah quarter to the north of al-Manṣūr's Round City. This last group resented the Persophile policies of al-Ma'mūn exemplified, as they saw it, by his favor to the Sahl brothers; hence they took the lead in raising to power at Baghdad other members of the 'Abbāsīd family, notably in 201(817) al-Manṣūr b. al-Mahdī as amīr or nominal deputy for the Caliph, and then in 202(817) Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī as an explicit anti-Caliph. The military maneuvers of the respective groups, covering an area between Baghdad and Baṣrah, are treated in great detail, as are domestic events within the capital itself, including the fascinating episode of the attempt of the local representatives of Sunnī orthodox piety, Khālīd al-Daryūsh and Sahl b. Salāmah, to take advantage of the deep yearning for public order after the social chaos and strife of the Civil War years and to establish in Baghdad a theocratic society with the secular power made more conformable to the moral imperatives of the Qur'ān and sunnah.

This period of storm and stress comes to an end with al-Ma'mūn's migration from Khurasan to assume the throne of his forefathers in their traditional capital; the collapse of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī's anti-caliphate; and the latter's subsequent ignominious capture in the streets of Baghdad wearing female guise. The death—most probably accidental—of the Eighth Imām of the Shī'a, 'Alī al-Riḍā, conveniently brought about the abandonment of al-Ma'mūn's policy of endeavoring to reconcile the two wings of Islam, Sunnī and Shī'ī, by making the Imām his heir, though a similar policy was sustained on the intellectual plane with the enforcement by al-Ma'mūn and his two successors of Mu'tazilī theological doctrines. The most serious grievances of the anti-Iranizing forces in Iraq were removed by the murder of al-Faḍl b. Sahl in 202(818) and the illness and retirement shortly afterwards of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl.

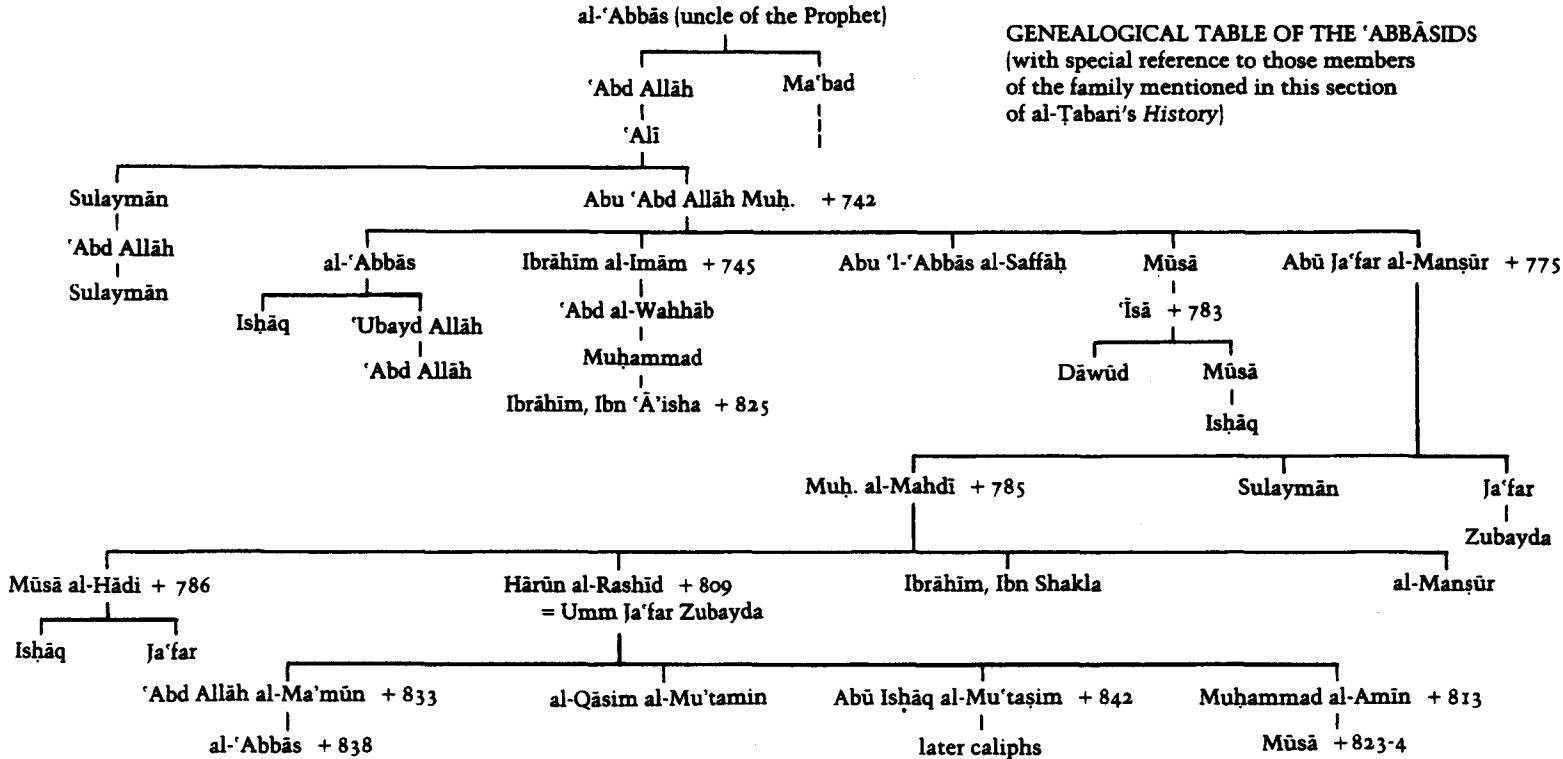
Hence Ṭabarī's narrative for the last decade-and-a-half of al-Ma'mūn's reign is taken up with such episodes as the final quelling of Naṣr b. Shabath's prolonged uprising amongst the

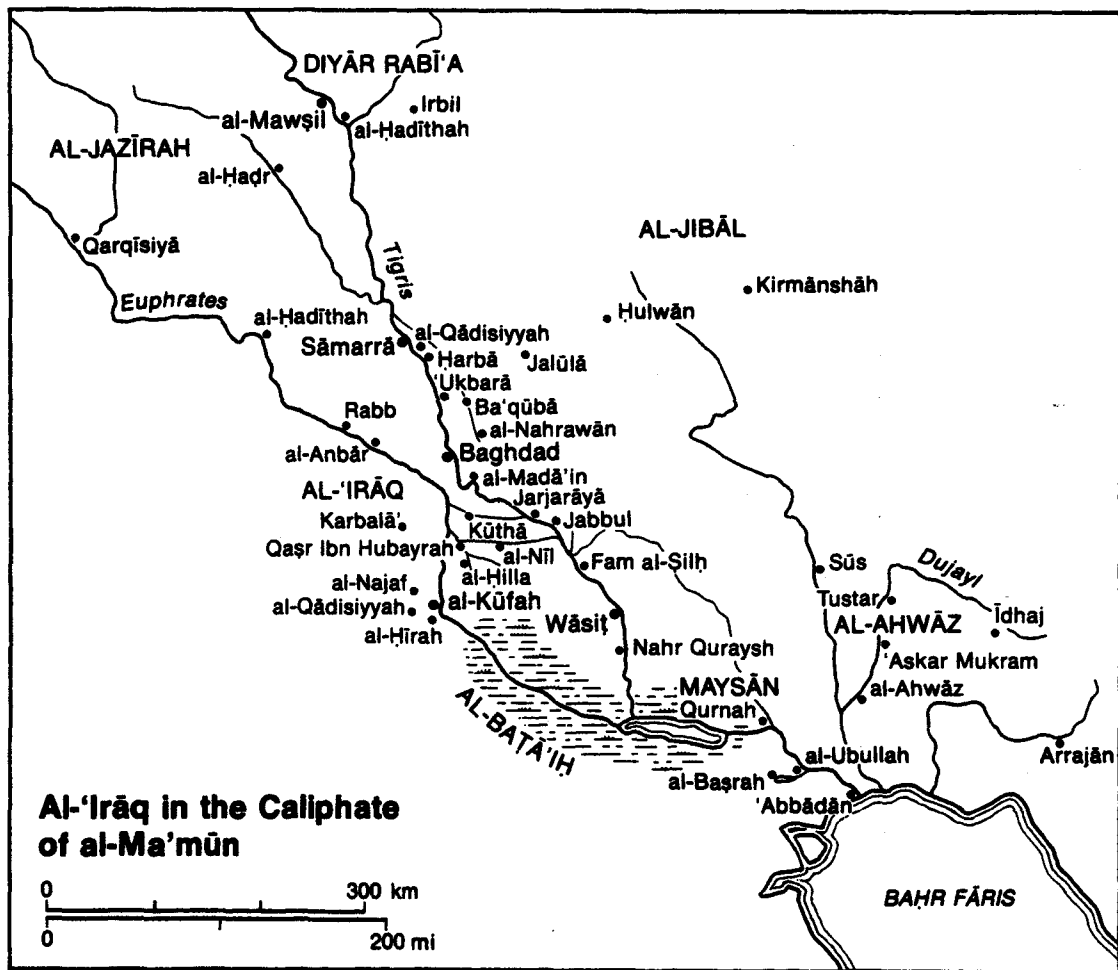
Arabs of the Jazīrah; the story of Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn's appointment as governor of Khurasan and his apparent repudiation of caliphal authority just before his sudden death in 207(822); the munificent ceremonies attending al-Ma'mūn's consummation of his marriage to Būrān, daughter of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl, at Fam al-Šilḥ; the abortive rebellion in Baghdad of the 'Abbāsid Ibn 'Ā'ishah; the restoration of caliphal authority in Egypt; and the last campaigns of al-Ma'mūn against the Byzantine emperor Theophilus, in the course of which he was to die near Tarsus in 213(833). Above all, we find inserted here, under the events of the year 213(833), the story of the beginnings of the *miḥnah* or inquisition by means of which al-Ma'mūn endeavored to impose on the leading religious dignitaries of the empire acquiescence in the Mu'tazilī doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān. The annals proper of al-Ma'mūn's caliphate close with a selection of anecdotes about the Caliph and his conduct, relating to his stay in Syria or to his presence at the court in (normally) Baghdad.

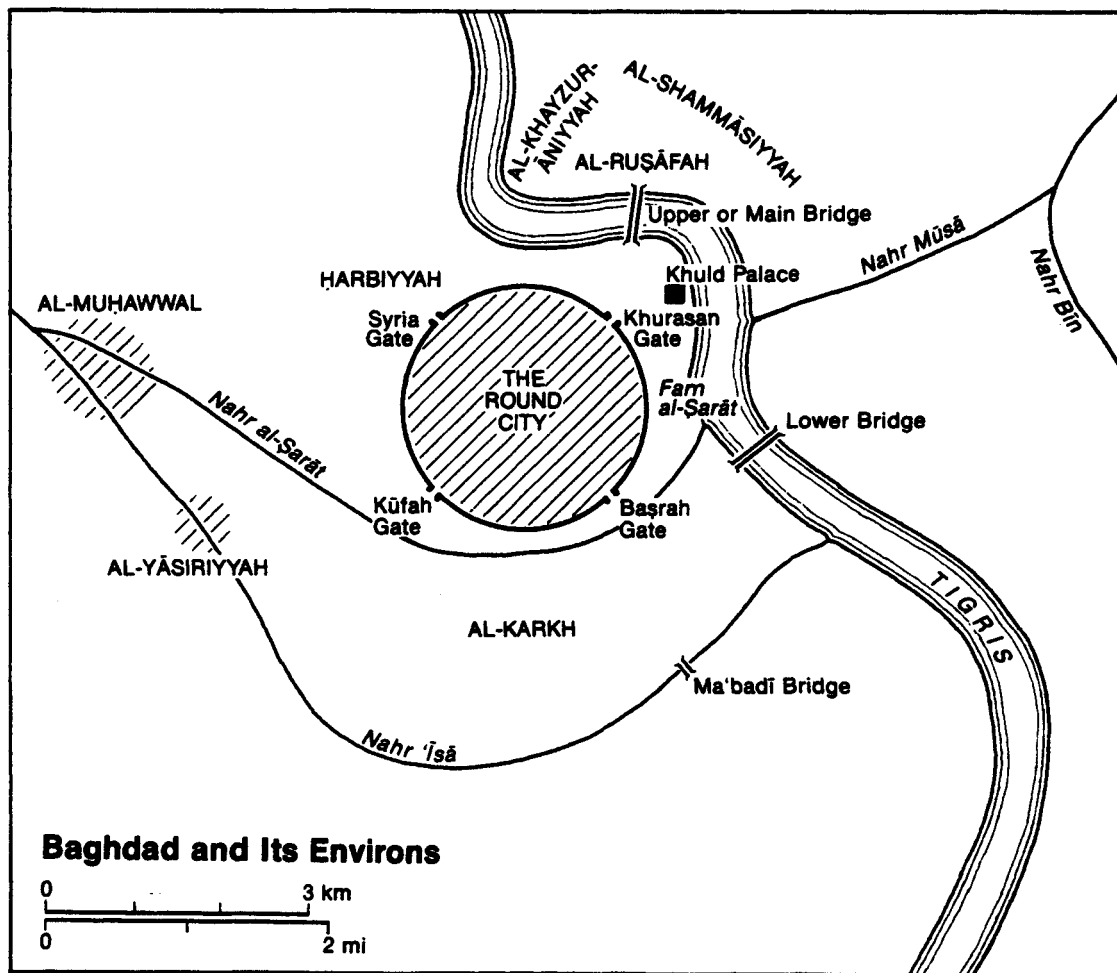
A feature of the post-204(819) part of Ṭabarī's account of al-Ma'mūn's caliphate is his insertion of the apparently complete texts of various chancery or *inshā'* documents, such as Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn's admonition to his son 'Abdallāh, itself an early example of the "Mirrors for Princes" genre in Arabic; letters from al-Ma'mūn and 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir summoning the rebel Naṣr b. Shabath to obedience; the letter from Aḥmad b. Yūsuf to 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir congratulating him on receiving the surrender of the Egyptian rebel 'Ubaydallāh b. al-Sarī; the public proclamation made on the occasion of al-Ma'mūn's execution of 'Alī b. Hishām; the correspondence between al-Ma'mūn and the Emperor Theophilus; al-Ma'mūn's *waṣiyyah* or dying testament to his brother Abū Ishāq al-Mu'taṣim; and above all, the series of three lengthy letters sent by al-Ma'mūn, en route for the Byzantine front, to his lieutenant in Baghdad, the Ṭāhirid Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Muṣ'abī, requiring subscription by the theologians and canon lawyers to the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān.

For some three-fifths of Ṭabarī's section on al-Ma'mūn's caliphate we have a parallel text, that of the surviving part of Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr's *Kitāb Baghdād*; the parallelism

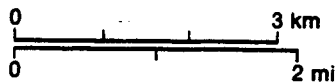
GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE 'ABBĀSIDS
(with special reference to those members
of the family mentioned in this section
of al-Ṭabarī's *History*)







Baghdad and Its Environs



begins in Ṭabarī at III, 1036, with the events of the year 204[819/20], but excludes a part of the extensive section (III, 1118–33) on the *miḥnah*, where several folios of the corresponding text of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir seem to have been lost. There is no doubt that Ṭabarī followed the older historian (who died in 280[893], according to al-Mas'ūdī and Ibn al-Nadīm), even though he only mentions Ibn Abī Ṭāhir once by name (in III, 1516, quoting him, citing Ibn al-Ṣūfī al-Ṭalībī on the rebellion of the Husaynī 'Alid Yaḥyā b. 'Umar b. Yaḥyā in Kūfah in 250[864]). Yet Ṭabarī copied intelligently; thus Keller, the editor and translator of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, has pointed out that he omitted two verses of the ode to al-Ma'mūn by which Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī made his submission to the Caliph because Ibn Abī Ṭāhir's text rendered them faultily. He was also, as an annalist, less interested in literary and cultural history, hence he omitted some of the anecdotes which Ibn Abī Ṭāhir gives at the end of his narrative about al-Ma'mūn's stay in Damascus and about the poets and singers at his court; but it seems certain that the passage on the *miḥnah* mentioned above as unique to Ṭabarī stemmed also from Ibn Abī Ṭāhir. However, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir's concentration on affairs in Iraq and Syria meant that Ṭabarī could not, as a conscientious annalist, entirely pass by events in other parts of the caliphate comprising the Islamic heartlands, and so had to find other sources for, e.g., the events in Egypt. Here, two sources are specifically mentioned: Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Makhḻad, who was personally in Egypt at the time of 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir's quelling of the revolt of Ibn al-Sarī (III, 1087); and, more vaguely, several of the indigenous people of Egypt (III, 1091). Other items of information, e.g., the sparse ones relating to events in Khurasan and on the far eastern fringes of the caliphate, must have come from (to us) unknown chronicles, *kutub al-ta'rīkh*. The whole question of the relationship between Ibn Abī Ṭāhir and Ṭabarī has been discussed in a highly detailed and masterly fashion, so as to require no further discussion here, by Keller in the Introduction to his German translation of the *Kitāb Baghdād*, II, pages XIII–XXVI.

Although Ibn Abī Ṭāhir's history is a parallel text and source and, therefore, provides a control for much of Ṭabarī's text, Stanislas Guyard, who edited pages 459–1163 of the *Tertia se-*

ries of Ṭabarī's history, faced peculiar difficulties in his task. Like Ibn Abī Ṭāhir's history (which Guyard utilised in the then still unedited British Museum manuscript), much of this section, from page 755 l. 14 onwards, rests on a unicum in the Istanbul manuscript Köprülü 1041 (C) copied in 651(1253). From page 1068 l. 11 onwards, it is true, he had a second manuscript, located in the Oxford Bodleian, Pococke 354 (O), but this has a lacuna from page 1101 l. 16 to page 1112 l. 14 (see the general editor de Goeje's *Introductio*, page LXV). That the text which Guyard finally produced for the period of al-Ma'mūn's caliphate reads as intelligibly as it mostly does is a tribute to his sagacity and insight; the obscure passages which remain would not appear to be capable of complete elucidation unless fresh good manuscripts turn up.

There remains only the pleasant task of thanking those who have given valuable advice on problems connected with the text or have lent me necessary books: my colleague Dr. Norman Calder; my former student Dr. Yūsuf Abū al-'Addūs; and my friends Dr. Martin Hinds, Dr. Patricia Crone and Dr. Carole Hillenbrand. I am particularly indebted to Dr. Hinds, who has read through the whole of my translation and accompanying notes, and has indicated many useful references, corrections and improvements; but for any remaining shortcomings, the responsibility is mine alone.

C.E. Bosworth
Manchester, April 1984

Storm and Stress
along the Northern Frontiers of the
'Abbāsid Caliphate
Volume XXXIII
Translated by C. E. Bosworth

This section of al-Tabarī's *History* covers the eight-year reign of al-Mu'tasim (833-42), immediately following the reign of his elder brother al-Ma'mūn, when the Islamic caliphate was once more united after the civil strife and violence of the second decade of the ninth century A.D. Al-Mu'tasim's reign is notable for the transfer of the administrative capital of the caliphate from Baghdad north to the military settlement of Sāmarrā on the Tigris, where it was to remain for some sixty years. This move meant a significant increase in the caliphs' dependence on their Turkish slave guards. Al-Mu'tasim's reign was also marked by periods of intense military activity along the northern fringes of the Islamic lands: against the Byzantines in Anatolia; against the sectarian Bābak and his followers—the "wearers of red," the Khurramiyyah—in northwestern Persia; and against the politically ambitious local prince Mazyar in the Caspian provinces of Persia. These episodes take up the greater part of al-Tabarī's account of al-Mu'tasim's reign, and he has provided graphic and detailed narratives of the respective campaigns, including valuable details on military organization and tactics during this period.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXIII

***Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the
‘Abbāsīd Caliphate***

THE CALIPHATE OF AL-MU’TAṢIM

A.D. 833–842/A.H. 218–227



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(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l mulūk*)

VOLUME XXXIII

**Storm and Stress along the Northern
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translated and annotated
by

C. E. Bosworth

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of

transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Abbreviations

- BGA:** *Bibliotheca geographorum arabicorum*
BiOr: *Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
CT: *Cahiers de Tunisie*
EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islām*, first edition
EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, second edition
Elr: *Encyclopaedia Iranica*
GAL: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte des arabischen Literatur*
GAS: F. Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*
GCAL: G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur*
GMS: Gibb Memorial Series
HJAS: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
IC: *Islamic Culture*
Iran, JBIPS: *Iran, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*
Isl.: *Der Islam*
JA: *Journal Asiatique*
JAL: *Journal of Arabic Literature*
JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JESHO: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*
JHS: *Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JIH: *Journal of Indian History*
JRAS: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*
JSai: *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam*
JSS: *Journal of Semitic Studies*
JTS: *Journal of Theological Studies*
MW: *The Muslim World*
REI: *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*

RSO: Rivista degli Studi Orientali

SI: Studia Islamica

St. Ir.: Studia Iranica

WbKAS: Wörterbuch der klassischen arabischen Sprache

ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

Translator's Foreword

Al-Mu'taṣim's reign of almost nine years saw a recrudescence of conflict and disturbance such as had characterized the early years of the previous caliphate, that of his brother al-Ma'mūn, but with the difference that the focuses of discontent were now no longer Baghdad and Iraq but rather the northern fringes of the Persian lands and, to a lesser extent, Syria and Palestine.

It is not therefore surprising that in this section of his *History* Ṭabarī should devote a great amount of space to, and provide the most detailed and graphic historical accounts that we possess of, the last years and final overthrow of Bābak and his Khurramī movement in Ādharbayjān and Arrān, as well as the eventually unsuccessful rebellion of the Qārinid prince Māzyār b. Qārin in Ṭabaristān and the Caspian provinces. The ideology and beliefs of the Khurramiyyah are unfortunately insufficiently known for us to decide whether the primary impulse behind the movement, of which Bābak was only the latest leader, was religious, perhaps a recrudescence of neo-Mazdakism, or whether the movement was one of social protest or of incipient Persian national feeling directed against the Arab political domination of Persia.¹ It is,

1. Cf. A. H. M. Jones, "Were Ancient Heresies National or Social Movements in Disguise?" *JTS*, N.S. 10 (1959): 280-98. Jones is very skeptical that ethnic or "nationalist" motivations were at work among the heterodox Christian sects of the later Roman and early Byzantine empires; for example, North African Donatism or Egyptian Monophysitism. We should probably be equally wary of imputing similar motivations to early Islamic religious dissidence in the Iranian world.

however, certain that the aim of Māzyār, himself a convert to Islam in the previous reign, was eventually to extend his own political authority over neighboring petty dynasties and to achieve a position within the Caspian provinces comparable to that of his rival 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir in Khurāsān, rather than to subvert the position of Islam in Persia by engaging in a grand conspiracy against it in alliance with al-Afshin, the prince of the Transoxanian principality of Ushrūsānah.

Ṭabarī likewise devotes considerable space and detail to the external campaign that established al-Mu'taṣim's reputation as a great *ghāzī*-prince and hammer of infidels, the attack in 223 (838) on the Byzantine city of Anqirah (Ankara) and the sack of another great fortress of central Anatolia, 'Ammūriyyah (Amorion), the original home of the ruling Amorian dynasty, in retaliation for a preceding Greek attack on the Muslim population of Zibāṭrah in the Byzantine-Arab marches.

Ṭabarī's interest as a chronicler of the 'Abbāsids was in the heartlands of Islam, so that we lack from him any information at all about the eastern and western wings of the caliphal dominions—a general characteristic of his treatment of other 'Abbāsīd caliphates. Thus we learn nothing about what was happening in Sind under its Arab governors; about events in Sīstān and eastern Khurāsān, where serious Khārijite uprisings continued to disturb the countryside; or about the political processes in Transoxania, where the Sāmānīd family was consolidating its power under the aegis of the Ṭāhirīd governors in Nayshābūr. Regarding the Muslim west, Ṭabarī tells us nothing about Egypt, the Maghrib, and Spain, though these years were areas in which, for example, the Aghlabīd conquest of Sicily from the Byzantines was proceeding apace.

Even information on what was happening in Iraq and the traditional capital of the 'Abbāsids, Baghdad, is sparse compared with Ṭabarī's concentration on events there during al-Amin's brief caliphate and al-Ma'mūn's early years, when he was still based in Marw in Khurāsān and Baghdad itself was for the most part in hands hostile to him. The major happening in Iraq during al-Mu'taṣim's reign was, of course, the Caliph's decision to transfer the military and administrative capital of the 'Abbāsīd empire from Baghdad to Sāmarrā in 220 (835) and to buttress his

personal power there with a professional army, in which Turkish slave soldiers were prominent. Although the sources are not explicit, the research of scholars like David Ayalon have made it abundantly clear that al-Ma'mūn came to feel, in view of the support that the *ahl Baghdād*, the Abnā' (the Arabs from Khurāsān who had migrated westward to Baghdad and become the mainstays of the first 'Abbāsīd caliphs), had given to his rival al-Amin in the civil warfare of 195-98 (811-13) and their subsequent chronic disaffection, that he could never thenceforth rely on them and must accordingly seek his personal military support elsewhere. Al-Mu'taṣim carried the process farther and came to realize—as the sources frankly state—that his new Turkish slave soldiery would never be welcomed in Baghdad by the Abnā', who were dominant there. He thus planned his new capital a safe seventy miles away at Sāmarrā.² The wisdom of his policies must have been further apparent to al-Mu'taṣim when he was nearly toppled from his throne on his way home from the 'Ammūriyyah campaign by a conspiracy largely mounted by the Arab and Khurāsānian commanders to raise his nephew al-'Abbās b. al-Ma'mūn to the caliphate. In this abortive putsch, Turkish commanders of the army like Ashnās and Bughā remained conspicuously loyal, and their influence in the state grew proportionately. The condemnation in 225 (840) of al-Afshīn, who had been the victor over Bābak only three years previously, may be viewed as a further diminution of the influence of the 'Abbāsīds' traditional support from the peoples of the eastern Iranian world, whether the Arabs originally settled in Khurāsān or, in the case of al-Afshīn, Iranians from the pre-Islamic local aristocracy. Only in Khurāsān itself was al-Mu'taṣim wise enough to retain 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir in Nayshābūr as the supremely capable and knowledgeable controller of events in the east, and 'Abdallāh's first cousin Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥusayn b. Muṣ'ab, governor of Baghdad for the Caliphs, always remained one of the closest confidants of both al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'taṣim.

If we depended solely on Ṭabarī for information on al-Mu'taṣim and the events of his reign, we would be unaware of the major

2. See Ayalon, *The Military Reforms of Caliph al-Mu'taṣim*, pp. 4-12, 31-33.

event of intellectual and theological significance during these years; that is, the continuation by al-Mu'taṣim of the *Mihnah*, or inquisition, involving the requirement of assent to Mu'tazilī doctrine on such questions as the createdness of the Qur'ān as a condition for holding official legal and theological posts. Al-Ma'mūn had put these measures into effect in Iraq during the last year of his life, and al-Mu'taṣim had been his close lieutenant in this.³ Thus it was al-Mu'taṣim who in Jumādā I 218 (June 833), two months before his brother's death, had written to the governor of Egypt, Naṣr b. 'Abdallāh Kaydar,⁴ and to the governor of Syria, Ishāq b. Yaḥyā b. Mu'ādh al-Khuttalī,⁵ obliging them to enforce the stipulations of the *Mihnah* in their provinces. These Mu'tazilī measures were enthusiastically promoted, and the caliph's resolution was stiffened by one of al-Mu'taṣim's closest intimates and the most decisive single influence on him, his chief judge, Aḥmad b. Abī Duwād.⁶ In Ramaḍān 219 (September–October 835) the spearhead of the conservative, orthodox opposition to the new official policies, the Imām Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, was summoned before the caliph and, after refusing his assent to Mu'tazilī measures, was severely beaten and jailed for two years.⁷ There seems also to have been an intensification of inquisitorial activities in the year or so before al-Mu'taṣim's death, both in Egypt under the Mu'tazilī *faqīh* Muḥammad b. Abī al-Layth al-Aṣamm and in Baghdad under the judge Shu'ayb b. Sahl.⁸

The picture of al-Mu'taṣim's character and aptitudes that emerges from Ṭabarī's pages is not very clear, except that his strategic skill and generalship are demonstrated by his careful planning of the Anatolian campaign, involving a meticulously timed pincer movement on the Anatolian cities executed by the

3. For Ṭabarī's account of these developments, see vol. III, 1112–33; trans. Bosworth, *The Reunification of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate*, pp. 199–222.

4. Kindī, *Kitāb al-wulāt wa-kitāb al-quḍāt*, pp. 193, 445–49.

5. Ibn 'Asākir, *Tahdhib ta'rikh Dimashq*, vol. II, p. 458.

6. On him, see p. 33 n. 127 below.

7. W. M. Patton, *Ahmed ibn Hanbal and the Mihna*, pp. 90–113; W. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought*, pp. 178, 292.

8. See *El*², s.v. "Mihna" (M. Hinds).

two wings of the Muslim army led by himself and al-Afshin respectively. His personal bravery also seems established. Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī's biography of him illustrates, with several episodes recounted on the authority of Ibn Abi Duwād, al-Mu'taṣim's great physical strength,⁹ and it emerges from Ṭabarī's own pages that he was a lover of the game of polo.¹⁰ Also, his kingly presence and dignity were regarded as particularly awe-inspiring.¹¹ It does, however, appear that these features and traits of character were combined with what was at times a violent temper and lack of self-control.¹²

Intellectually, he appears insignificant beside his brother al-Ma'mūn, with his wide-ranging scientific and philosophical interests, and is described in some sources as totally lacking in learning (though some Arabic verses are nevertheless attributed to him).¹³ Subkī was doubtless right when he asserted that al-Mu'taṣim had not the intellectual formation to make an informed decision on the correctness of the Mu'tazilī measures being enforced under the *Miḥnah* but was largely impelled to continue them by al-Ma'mūn's dying charge to him¹⁴ and the influence over him of Ibn Abi Duwād and others.¹⁵

The sketchiness of Ṭabarī's portrayal of the caliph is emphasized by the paucity of anecdotes about his conduct and character that he retails, compared with the number of similar stories given for Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Ma'mūn, for example. For amplification of such material on al-Mu'taṣim, one has to go to such works as the *Kitāb al-aghānī* and the *adab* collections.¹⁶ One facet of culture, in the widest sense, does seem to have interested the caliph, however: He appreciated food and was interested in the *haute cuisine* of the time, as were other members of his

9. *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, vol. IV, p. 49 no. 500.

10. Ṭabarī, vol. III, pp. 1326–27 (p. 213 below).

11. Kutubī, *Fawāt al-wafayāt*, vol. IV, p. 49 no. 500: *min ahyab al-khulafā'*.

12. Cf. Ṭabarī, vol. III, p. 1326 (p. 212 below).

13. Kutubī, vol. IV, pp. 49–50.

14. Ṭabarī, vol. III, pp. 1136, 1137–38; trans. Bosworth, pp. 225, 227–28.

15. Cited in Patton, p. 114.

16. Some material additional to that of Ṭabarī was adduced by E. Herzfeld, *Geschichte der Stadt Samarra*, pp. 153 ff.

family.¹⁷ This emerges from a passage in Mas'ūdi describing how, at his Jawsaq palace in Sāmarrā, al-Mu'taṣim brought in Ibn Abī Duwād to adjudicate various dishes of food prepared by his boon companions.¹⁸ In addition, a *nuskah* (list, collection of recipes?) on practical cookery by al-Mu'taṣim is mentioned—together with similar *nusakh* and *kutub* by Yaḥyā b. Khālīd al-Barmakī, al-Ma'mūn, al-Wāthiq, and the like—in a later fourth-century (tenth-century) cookbook, Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq's *Kitāb al-Ṭabīkh*.¹⁹

The editor of this section of Ṭabarī's *History*, the general editor, M. J. de Goeje, had at his disposal as the basis for his text two manuscripts, one in Istanbul, Köprülü 1040-2 (C), and one in Oxford, Bodleian Uri 650 (O).²⁰ Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm used the Leiden text as the basis for his Cairo edition of 1960-69 but in this section of the text he added a few readings from another Istanbul manuscript, Ahmet III 2959,²¹ the extra information is, however, negligible.

This section of Ṭabarī on the caliphate of al-Mu'taṣim is the only substantial portion of the Islamic part of the *History* treating an entire caliphal reign that has previously been translated into a Western language, in Elma Marin's *The Reign of al-Mu'taṣim* (833-842) (American Oriental Series 35, New Haven, 1951), prepared under the guidance of the late G. E. von Grunebaum.²² It has been discussed at some length by F.-C. Muth, who noted the views and comments of various reviewers soon after the book's appearance.²³

In general, these reviewers welcomed Marin's rendering as the first sizable portion of Ṭabarī's text to be translated since Theodor Nöldeke's exemplary *Geschichte der Perser und Araber* some

17. E.g., Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, whom David Waines describes as the author of the first, practical, comprehensive cookbook; "A Prince of Epicures: The Arabs' First Cookbook," *Ur*, 3 (1984), pp. 26-29.

18. *Murūj al-dhahab*, vol. VII, 214-20 = pars. 2898-2904.

19. At p. 265, specifically for the confecting of the sweetmeat *lawzīnaj*.

20. See *Introductio*, pp. XLVII-XLVIII, LV-LVI, LXV.

21. See the *muqaddimah* of his edition, vol. I, pp. 30-31.

22. Cf. F. Rosenthal's brief words on translations of Ṭabarī, in *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. I, 144-45.

23. *Die Annalen von al-Ṭabarī im Spiegel der europäischen Bearbeitungen*, 61-63.

seventy years before, while disagreeing with her opinion that Ṭabarī's style is flat and uninteresting and his narrative consequently dry and jejune. Their main criticism of her work, however, was that it is in general too free, often without regard for the subtleties of Arabic syntax, as for example, in the use of dependent circumstantial clauses, relative clauses, and the like.²⁴ Their criticism is, indeed, quite justified, one might add that the connections, distinctions, and changes brought into the flow of the narrative by Ṭabarī's choice of *wa-*, *fa-*, and *thumma*—the usage of which in Arabic is never haphazard—were not always recognized by Marin and taken into account in her rendering. Also, some of the technicalities of early 'Abbāsīd history eluded her, for example, the identification of the troops of the Ḥarbiyyah quarter of Baghdad (Ṭabarī, vol. III, p. 1179 l. 14 = trans. Marin, p. 15 and n. 105a) and of the Abnā' (vol. III, p. 1181 l. 3 = trans. Marin, p. 16; cf. p. 7 n. 57). It is only fair to observe that much less was known about these groups forty years ago, before the work of Ayalon and others on the military foundations of the early 'Abbāsīd caliphate, though research centered on Sāmarrā by Ernst Herzfeld (not used at all by Marin) might have put her on the right track.

There remains the pleasant task of thanking those scholars who have given advice and help on certain difficult passages and on certain doubtful points, the sorts of problem from which no substantial passage of Ṭabarī's *History* is free; as Helmut Ritter stated, there is an ever-present danger of becoming lost in the Arabic/Arabian desert ("in der arabischen wüste").²⁵ In particular, I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Norman Calder and to Professor Josef van Ess (Tübingen), Professor Wilferd Madelung (Oxford), and Dr. David Waines (Lancaster), while Dr. P. O. Skjærvø and Dr. Estelle Whelan (New York) have provided valuable corrections to my text in the fields of Iranian philology and Islamic art respectively. Nevertheless, I must add the usual disclaimer that any errors and imperfections are my responsibility alone.

C. E. Bosworth

24. Cf. H. Horst, *ZDMG*, 105 (1955): 219.

25. *Oriens* 6 (1953): 157.

Incipient Decline
Volume XXXIV

Translated and Annotated by Joel L. Kraemer

The events described in this volume took place during al-Ṭabarī's own time. Al-Ṭabarī was thus writing "contemporary history," and his narrative, often based on first-hand reports, is drawn in vivid and arresting detail. The volume portrays the summit of "the Sāmarrā period," following al-Muṭṭaṣim's transfer of the ʿAbbāsid capital upstream from Baghdad to Sāmarrā.

Three caliphs are portrayed in this volume: al-Muṭṭaṣim's son and successor, al-Wāthiq; al-Wāthiq's brother al-Mutawakkil; and al-Mutawakkil's son al-Muntaṣir. At this time the ʿAbbāsid caliphs came under the dominant influence of the Turkish military elite. The crowning example of Turkish power and ʿAbbāsid frailty was the dramatic assassination of al-Mutawakkil by Turkish officers within the precincts of his own palace. The Turks were afterward not only instrumental in raising al-Muntaṣir to the caliphate, they also forced him to depose his two brothers as heirs apparent. Finally, they had al-Muntaṣir himself killed.

During the period of al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil, insurrections erupted in the center of the empire, and serious revolts broke out in distant provinces, including Africa and Armenia. The Byzantine raids on Damietta and Samosata were memorable events, and periodic Muslim forays were made into Byzantine territory. Prisoner exchanges between Muslims and Byzantines are reported in engaging detail on the basis of eyewitness testimony. The report of a prisoner release by a Shiʿite emissary to the Byzantine emperor contains a charming description of his visit to Constantinople and his audience with Michael III.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXIV

Incipient Decline

THE CALIPHATES OF AL-WĀTHIQ, AL-MUTAWAKKIL,
AND AL-MUNTAṢIR

A. D. 841-863 / A. H. 227-248



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The History of al-Tabarī
(*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XXXIV

Incipient Decline

translated and annotated
by

Joel L. Kraemer

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the diving lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash

(—) between the individual links in the chain. Thus, According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.



Translator's Foreword



Ya'qūbī begins his description of Sāmarrā thus: "We shall now speak of Surra Man Ra'a ('He who sees it rejoices'), the second capital of the Hāshimite caliphs. Eight caliphs have resided there." The caliphs he mentions, after its founder al-Mu'taṣim, were all sons or grandsons of his. Three of them are treated in this volume, namely, al-Mu'taṣim's son and successor al-Wāthiq, al-Wāthiq's brother al-Mutawakkil, and al-Mutawakkil's son al-Muntaṣir. This was the summit of what has been called "the Sāmarrā period." The massive building projects in the new capital—quarters, palaces, mosques, gardens, markets, thoroughfares, canals, and so on—inaugurated by al-Mu'taṣim and carried on by al-Wāthiq, and especially by al-Mutawakkil, defined Sāmarrā's physical character.

Al-Mu'taṣim is said to have founded Sāmarrā and to have moved upstream to his new capital in order to avoid the perennial clashes and friction between the Turkish troops and the Baghdad populace. In Sāmarrā, with wisdom that grows from experience, al-Mu'taṣim adopted a policy of isolating the Turkish (and related) military elite from the rest of the population. The Turkish officers—men such as Ashnās, Bughā the Elder, Bughā the Younger, Ītākh, Waṣīf, and Sīmā (whom we shall meet on the following pages)—were assigned fiefs, as were civil officers and other members of the ruling elite. High Turkish officers were given palaces. The famous Jawsaq al-Khāqānī, which came to be a caliphal residence, had in fact been the palace of al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān.

The Turkish presence in Sāmarrā cast long shadows. The ca-

liphs of Banū Hāshim came under the dominant influence of the Turkish military class. Al-Mu'taṣim's policy of segregating the Turkish soldiery, it has been suggested (by J. M. Rogers, "Sāmarrā"), was aimed at achieving his own personal safety. (See also Ayalon, "Mamlūk Military Institution," 54–55). If so, this strategy certainly backfired. For it is more than likely that their isolation contributed to their growing consolidation and power. It is significant that when Ītākh was trapped and murdered in Baghdad by order of al-Mutawakkil, our narrator points out that this never could have happened in Sāmarrā. "Were he not seized in Baghdad, they would have been unable to apprehend him. Had he entered Sāmarrā and wanted his men to kill all his opponents, he would have been able to accomplish this."

The crowning example of Turkish power and Hāshimite frailty was the assassination of al-Mutawakkil by Turkish officers within the precincts of his own palace. The Turks were afterwards not only instrumental in raising al-Muntaṣir to the caliphate—he was, it appears, involved in the assassination plot—they also forced him eventually to depose his two brothers as heirs apparent, and finally they (evidently) had al-Muntaṣir himself killed.

The attempts by the 'Abbāsid caliphs to counter and alleviate the growing Turkish pressure foundered. Near the beginning of his reign, al-Wāthiq arrested and fined a group of eminent secretaries, that is, administrators and officials. This measure, allegedly prompted by his wazīr Ibn al-Zayyāt, was conceivably aimed at securing funds to pay the salaries of the Turkish military personnel, as some sources say. But a further motive—also mentioned—may have been to strike a blow at these very Turks, such as Ītākh and Ashnās. Many of the leading secretaries arrested were in their service. But this step was isolated and ineffectual. In any case, it is noteworthy that al-Wāthiq was (reportedly) moved to fine and imprison the secretaries by the precedent set by his grandfather, Hārūn al-Rashīd, who had removed the Barmakids from favor because of their alleged control over the caliphate. To be sure, such expropriations were basically predatory. And al-Wāthiq's successor, his brother al-Mutawakkil, shortly after assuming office, removed officials, confiscated property, and executed powerful notables.

The two mainstays of the administration—the military officers

and civil officials—worked hand in hand directing the affairs of the far-flung empire. The base of power was a praetorian-bureaucratic condominium, buttressed by the swords of the Turks and the pens of the secretaries. It would be a mistake to view the Turkish military elite as a purely martial force. The Turks often served as government administrators and provincial rulers. The cultural attainments of some members of this military aristocracy are noteworthy. The rapid acculturation of the Turkish immigrants to the 'Abbāsid realm is indeed striking. Faṭḥ b. al-Khāqān, son of a newcomer, was a first-generation, arabicized Turk. (Consider also the famous philosopher Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī [d. 950], who was born in Turkeṣtān, in the district of Fārāb, to a father who came to Baghdad as an army commander.)

Al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān was knowledgeable in the Arabic language, assimilated Arab culture, and amassed a great library that also served his friend and protégé, Abū 'Uthmān 'Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ. The latter's *Fī manāqib al-Turk* (*On the Merits of the Turks*) was addressed to al-Faṭḥ. In his brief treatise Jāḥiẓ in fact concentrates on the horsemanship, bowmanship and, in general, upon the courage, pride, and military prowess of the Turks, although he cites (van Vloten, *Tria opuscula*, 47) exceptions, noting also that military prowess itself requires other virtues, including technical knowledge, cultural refinement and administrative competence (which al-Faṭḥ, we may add, evidently possessed). Ṭabarī does not comment on the cultural pretensions and attainments of the Turks, but neither does he take interest in secular culture in general. This was the age of Ḥunayn b. Ishāq and his school, translators of Greek science and philosophy into Syriac and Arabic, and yet not a whit of this is mentioned. Ṭabarī does not evince the interest that (the Shī'ite historians) Ya'qūbī and Mas'ūdī exhibit in these matters.

The Turks were apparently the primary cause of al-Mutawakkil's rather mysterious move to reestablish his capital in Damascus, which is described in our narrative. The transfer of the seat of power may be seen as an effort to elude their overwhelming influence. It failed for somewhat obscure reasons—an inclement climate and a mutiny by Turkish troops over pay allotments are alluded to.

In military affairs the Turkish officer class clearly proved itself

absolutely indispensable. When revolts broke out in distant provinces, a local commander or an Arab officer from the central government would often be dispatched initially to suppress it. These first efforts were generally futile. As a result, a Turkish general—like Bughā the Elder or Bughā the Younger—was usually called upon to establish order and loyalty to the central government authorities. During the reign of al-Mutawakkil, wars at the periphery of the empire were particularly rampant—in Upper and Lower Egypt, Ādharbayjān, Armenia and Asia Minor—and these energetic Turkish commanders were kept very busy. These military expeditions to maintain government jurisdiction in the remotest regions betoken caliphal authority rather than weakness.

The power and influence of the Turkish praetorian guard invaded the Caliphal Palace itself. Al-Mutawakkil, as stated, was assassinated by a cabal of Turks, with his son al-Muntaṣir taking part in the conspiracy. The latter had cosseted the Turkish officers, much to his father's annoyance and discontent. Caliphs had been assassinated before: regicide was not uncommon in the annals of Islamic history. But never before had regicide taken the form of a patricide. This was indeed shocking and unprecedented. When al-Muntaṣir thereafter succeeded to the caliphate, tongues wagged and heads shook in dismay.

At this place in his narrative, Ṭabarī injects a personal note, a reminiscence from his youth: "I often heard people say," he states, "when the caliphate passed to al-Muntaṣir, that from the time he acceded to rule until his death he would live for six months, the extent of life of Shīrawayh b. Kisrā after he killed his father, and this was spread among the populace and notables alike."

Reading this volume the reader should bear in mind that the swirl of events described on its pages took place during Ṭabarī's lifetime. He was about three years old when al-Wāthiq came to power; about eight when al-Mutawakkil succeeded him; and about twenty-two when al-Muntaṣir supplanted his father. Thus, Ṭabarī lived through these events and had a personal connection with some of the action he describes. And if he did not experience events directly, he knew informants who did or who had their information from informants who did. His reports are often given

in vivid and striking detail. Moreover, he knew some of the protagonists personally. For instance, he was tutor to the sons of the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā (for ten dīnārs a month, it is said), and he studied with Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm al-Dawraqī, who supported the revolt of Aḥmad b. Naṣr.

Ṭabarī is, then, writing "contemporary history." And although he did not experience the major events directly, he often reports the testimony of people who did—eyewitnesses and informants who were in touch with eyewitnesses. Thus, our volume, unlike previous ones, lacks *isnāds* (chains of transmission); it contains relatively few anonymous informants—individual and collective—and rather many identified as actual participants in the events reported. A brief survey of sources may illustrate this point and bring out others regarding Ṭabarī's sources and his striking attention to authentic evidence and detail. He was not an ingenuous annalist but a genuine historian who searched for witnesses and documentation. His informants are occasionally very simple people—a singer, a black slave, a Turkish woman, and the ladies of the harem. The most momentous occasion, in fact, the murder of the caliph al-Mutawakkil, is reported by the most ordinary people.

Close to the beginning of his narrative, Ṭabarī describes caliph al-Wāthiq's arrest of government officials and confiscation of their property. For this purpose, he summons the testimony of a certain 'Azzūn b. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Anṣārī, who reports (p. 1331) a conversation with the caliph in his court. 'Azzūn attests that he was in al-Wāthiq's company when a discussion took place on the reason for the fall of the famous Barmakids, namely, their inordinate control over Hārūn al-Rashīd and his purse. Al-Wāthiq reportedly drew a lesson from his ancestor's experience and went on to deflate his own government officials.

During the period of al-Wāthiq and al-Mutawakkil insurrections and disturbances—major and minor—erupted in the center of the empire, and serious revolts broke out in distant provinces. The central government's expedition against the Banū Sulaym tribal group in the Ḥijāz (pp. 1335ff.) is described by a spectator, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Makhlad (pp. 1341, 1358), who marched with the commander Bughā al-Kabīr on his expedition to suppress the revolt. The campaign waged against the Banū Numayr tribal

group in al-Yamāmah is reported (p. 1358) by the same Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Makhlad, who again rubbed shoulders with Bughā and observed the events. The account is expanded by another spectator, who described Bughā's initial rout at the hands of the tribesmen (p. 1360). The insurgence of the religious leader Aḥmad b. Naṣr in Baghdad is reported (1343) on the authority of "some(one) of our shaykhs." ("Some[one]" renders *ba'd*, which may mean "one" or "some.") The source knew a man who visited with Aḥmad, and thus he was able to name his associates.

The revolt of Muḥammad b. al-Ba'ith in Ādharbayjān is reported partly (p. 1379) by an eyewitness, Abū al-Agharr, son-in-law of Ibn al-Ba'ith, who surrendered to the government forces and was brought to Sāmarrā, as was Ibn al-Ba'ith after his capture. The poet 'Alī b. al-Jahm was on hand (p. 1387) when Ibn al-Ba'ith was presented to al-Mutawakkil, and quotes Ibn al-Ba'ith's poetry recited on the occasion, noting the man's literary talent. Another (anonymous) spectator is also cited. Some accounts of prominent revolts are not assigned to a witness or authority, for instance, the revolt of the inhabitants of Armenia against Yūsuf b. Muḥammad (p. 1408) and its aftermath, namely, Bughā's defeat of Ishāq b. Ismā'il in Tiflis and the burning of the town (p. 1414). As a sequel to Aḥmad b. Naṣr's rebellion, Ṭabarī relates how his body was taken down from the gallows in Sāmarrā and sent with his friends to Baghdad (p. 1412). In this case, Ṭabarī cites a report by the postmaster of Baghdad to the caliph concerning the behavior of the populace and a letter from al-Mutawakkil to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir instructing him how to behave toward the crowds. The revolt of the inhabitants of Ḥimṣ against their chief of security police is related without reliance on (named) informants (p. 1420). The revolt of the Bujah tribesmen in Africa is described without a source for the events, but only a reference to the fact that Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm, chief of Egyptian Post and Intelligence, wrote to al-Mutawakkil about the uprising (p. 1429). The Byzantine raid on Damietta, a memorable event, is related (p. 1417) without authorities, as is most of Ṭabarī's (often fascinating) information concerning Byzantium. For instance, the Byzantine raid on Samosata is reported without an informant (p. 1447), as is the account telling that the inhabitants of Lulon prevented their (Byzantine) governor from entering the town. The caliph al-

Muntaşir's dispatching Waşif the Turk on a summer expedition to Byzantine territory is reported without source (p. 1480), although Ṭabarī preserves a long letter of al-Mutawakkil to Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir concerning Waşif's campaign. The letter, containing pious sentiments about the holy war, was written by the wazīr Aḥmad b. al-Khaşib (p. 1485).

The prisoner exchanges that took place in our period between the Muslims and Byzantines are reported in engrossing detail and on the basis of eyewitness testimony. The prisoner exchange of 231 (845-46) is related primarily (p. 1351) on the authority of Aḥmad b. Abī Qaḥṭabah, an associate of Khāqān al-Khādim, the Muslim representative at the exchange. In addition, Aḥmad b. al-Ḥārith's attestation is cited (p. 1353)—he had questioned Ibn Abī Qaḥṭabah and had also visited the Byzantine emperor. Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh al-Ṭarsūsī, a Muslim prisoner released by the Byzantines, describes (p. 1354) how the ransoming was actually carried out. A slightly different version (p. 1355) is offered by al-Sindī, *mawlā* of Ḥusayn al-Khādim, while Muḥammad b. Karīm, another Muslim prisoner, adds important details (p. 1356). The prisoner exchange of 246 (860) reported (p. 1449) by Naşr b. al-Azhar al-Shī'i ("the Shī'ite"), the emissary of al-Mutawakkil to the Byzantine emperor, contains a charming description of Naşr's visit to Constantinople and his audience with the emperor Michael III. The Shī'ite ambassador relates (correctly) that Bardas, maternal uncle of the emperor, was in charge of the affairs of the realm.

The rather frequent occasions when officials—even high officers such as wazīrs—were arrested and tortured to death are communicated by our historian with great care and precision. The famous wazīr Ibn al-Zayyāt, for instance, was tortured in an iron maiden, an instrument of his own design. A certain al-Dandānī communicates details of the wazīr's discomfort (p. 1374) on the basis of the torturer's own authoritative account. Further detail is provided by Mubārak al-Maghribī, who was also close to the scene.

The murder of Turkish commander Ītākḥ is told by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mudabbir (p. 1384). Ibrāhīm says that he had gone out with the chief of security police, Işḥāq b. Ibrāhīm, to meet Ītākḥ on his return from Mecca, and he gives a careful eyewitness account of

the process leading to the murder. A man named Turk, a *mawlā* of Iṣḥāq, reported (p. 1386) on a conversation he had with Ītākḥ while the latter was in prison.

The long account of Najāḥ's demise is related by (p. 1400) al-Hārith b. Abī Usāmah—historian and traditionist—and others. Al-Hārith gives details of the punishment (p. 1442).

Ṭabarī diligently preserves *literatim* documents concerning the events he portrays. While these documents, in a narrative setting, are not the same as archival records, their value is appreciable. Al-Mutawakkil's decree concerning Dhimmīs, for example, is presented (p. 1389) in its official form, and his letter concerning these regulations (p. 1390), sent to district governors, is also preserved. It was written by the secretary Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās al-Ṣūlī. Ṭabarī was presumably in touch with circles of government officials, like al-Ṣūlī, who were in a position to make this kind of material available to him. The letter of investiture by al-Mutawakkil to his three sons (p. 1396) was made in four copies, three for the sons and one for the library of the caliph. Ibrāhīm b. al-'Abbās al-Ṣūlī recited a poem about the investiture (p. 1402), and it appears that he also wrote these letters. To be sure, investiture documents were formularies and thus of less interest than some other records. Private correspondence of the caliph is also preserved, such as al-Mutawakkil's letter of condolence to Ṭāhir b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir (p. 1406) on the occasion of the death of his relative, Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm. The account of the abdication of the princes al-Mu'tazz and al-Mu'ayyad, brothers and heirs apparent of the caliph al-Muntaṣir (p. 1486), is accompanied by the text of the abdication (p. 1489), which had been read aloud by the wazīr Aḥmad b. al-Khaṣīb. And the text of the long letter, signed by Aḥmad, which al-Muntaṣir writes to Abū al-'Abbās Muḥammad b. 'Abdallāh b. Ṭāhir, pertaining to the abdication, is also presented. It is a pity that al-Mutawakkil's letters to the provinces prohibiting debate concerning the Qur'ān and the like have not been preserved (p. 1412).

Ṭabarī evidently had access to police records and information of the Bureau of Post and Intelligence (*barīd*). For instance, the notice on the death of al-Ḥasan b. Sahl (p. 1406) is derived from a report of al-Qāsim b. Aḥmad al-Kūfī. Al-Qāsim was in the service of al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān, who was in charge of Intelligence in Sāmarrā

and the Hārūnī Palace. Another source for this notice was Ibrāhīm b. 'Aṭā', supervisor of Intelligence in Sāmarrā. A day later, Ṭabarī writes, a dispatch came from the chief of Intelligence in Baghdad (Madinat al-Salām) announcing the death of Muḥammad b. Ishāq b. Ibrāhīm (p. 1407). In describing (p. 1424) the flogging of 'Īsā b. Ja'far b. 'Aṣim, a Shī'ite who had defamed Abū Bakr, 'Umar, 'A'ishah and Ḥafṣah, in the Sharqiyyah Quarter of Baghdad, Ṭabarī tells how the information about 'Īsā got to the authorities. The postmaster of Baghdad conveyed details to the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh b. Yaḥyā, who transmitted them to al-Mutawakkil. The report of the judge in 'Īsā's trial was evidently included in the postmaster's communication. Ṭabarī preserves the detailed letter of the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh in response to the judge's report, spelling out exactly how Ibn 'Āṣim should be punished. Ṭabarī's account of the appearance of Maḥmūd al-Naysabūrī in Sāmarrā (p. 1394), a man who claimed to be Dhū al-Qarnayn and a prophet, was probably based on police or intelligence records.

Ṭabarī relates accounts of the death of the three caliphs treated in this volume and the transition of power predominantly on the basis of participants' reports. The death of al-Wāthiq is based upon information (p. 1363) derived from a number of "our colleagues," but reports about al-Wāthiq's conduct prior to his death (p. 1365) are assigned to the poet al-Ḥusayn b. al-Ḍaḥḥāk, who was present. The transition from al-Wāthiq to al-Mutawakkil is told (p. 1368) by more than one authority, although Sa'īd the Younger reports (p. 1370) on Mutawakkil's relations with al-Wāthiq and events which preceded his being elevated to the caliphate. When al-Wāthiq placed his brother al-Mutawakkil in custody, Sa'īd was taken along with him.

The portrayal of the murder of al-Mutawakkil (p. 1452) is an outstanding narrative. On the fateful day, Ibn al-Ḥafṣī, the Singer, attended an audience with the caliph, and so was in a position to report (p. 1455) vital details. Ibn al-Ḥafṣī was accompanied by 'Ath'ath al-Aswad, a black slave, and a certain Naṣr b. Sa'īd al-Jahbadh ("the Government Banker"). He describes the caliph's cheer that day and his gloomy premonitions. Ibn al-Ḥafṣī also reports on caliph's ridicule of his son al-Muntaṣir one day earlier. Details of this treatment are assigned to Hārūn b. Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Hāshimī, who was informed by some(one) of the

women in the curtained off area. Then Bunān, a page and close associate of al-Muntaṣir, gives a report concerning al-Muntaṣir and his reaction to news of the caliph's assassination, hinting that he was taken by surprise (p. 1459). The black slave 'Ath'ath is the main observer who actually describes the assassination. His own role in defending the caliph, he says, was limited by the circumstance that he was struck by a blow on his head. An alternate description by Zurqān, deputy of the chamberlain Zurāfah, has it that 'Ath'ath fled headlong. Zurqān does not depict al-Muntaṣir as having been surprised (p. 1462). According to another report, a Turkish woman delivered a note regarding what the group planned to al-Faṭḥ b. Khāqān. Thus, he and the wazīr 'Ubaydallāh knew of the plot but were overconfident and did not prepare a defense.

Abū 'Uthmān b. Sa'īd the Younger (p. 1471) places full responsibility for the murder plot on al-Muntaṣir, but says that it was a defensive act. He tells of the aftermath of the assassination, al-Muntaṣir's announcement of the murder, and the oath of allegiance to him. Al-Muntaṣir's final illness is reported (pp. 1495ff.) by some(one) of the informants, with versions or details by Ibrāhīm b. Jaysh, Ibn Dihqānah, and Sa'īd b. Salāmah al-Naṣrānī.

Although Ṭabarī may have been affected by many of these events, personal accents are rarely audible. His primary task qua historian, as he conceived it, was to be a reliable transmitter of information, of tradition. He prefers just to give the facts without comment and fanfare. He does this conscientiously and with fine detail.

Although Ṭabarī's orientation was that of a Baghdadian, a supporter of the central government and a Sunnī Muslim (see Rosenthal, *History*, 134), these points of view are not intrusive in the narrative. If Ṭabarī held a personal position on Mu'tazilism, it is not reflected in our text. He tells dispassionately how al-Wāthiq made confession of the Mu'tazilite creed a condition for ransoming Muslim captives in the hands of the Byzantines—a policy that must have scandalized many Muslims. He describes with detachment the abortive revolt of Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Khuzā'i and his Traditionist supporters against al-Wāthiq and his pro-Mu'tazilah policy.

Indeed, his most intimate note is struck in connection with the

death of Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, which took place in 241 (856–57). Ṭabarī simply does not report it. His silence is eloquent. Ṭabarī's opinion of Ibn Ḥanbal was allegedly reserved, and his relations with the Ḥanbalī school were marred by strain and conflict. The discord brought on his head the wrath and abuse of Ḥanbalis and their many supporters among the populace (who eventually, it is reported, refused him a decent burial). Ṭabarī's passing over the death of Ibn Ḥanbal in total silence was surely not accidental. Other historians took note. And Mas'ūdī, duly registering the event, even recorded the popular belief that the world had dimmed on the occasion, mentioning a meteor storm that took place during that year. Ṭabarī reports the meteor storm, which he says was visible in Baghdad, but no more. Indeed, a later historian, Ibn Kathīr, noting Ṭabarī's silence, includes in his *Bidāyah* a long biographical encomium of Ibn Ḥanbal, almost by way of compensation. Ibn Kathīr observes that Ṭabarī did not in fact mark the death of *any* Ḥadīth scholars in 241, intimating that he went this far so as to avoid having to mention Ibn Ḥanbal.

We would not expect Ṭabarī, who was after all a pious Muslim, to have had much affection or sympathy for al-Mutawakkil. The caliph was a notorious tippler, sensual and ruthless, hardly an exemplar of God's vicegerent on earth. Ṭabarī recounts his cruel destruction of the wazīr Ibn al-Zayyāt and the Turk Ītākḥ, as well as his virtually systematic elimination of men who had helped his father found Sāmarrā. But he does not express a whit of criticism or bend his narrative to insinuate disapproval. On the contrary, he describes very movingly the scene when al-Mutawakkil returned to his palace after having viewed the populace that turned out to view him when he appeared in public. He took a handful of earth, Ṭabarī says, and sprinkled it upon his head, remarking, "I saw this great throng and, realizing that they were under my sway, I wished to humble myself before God." And Ṭabarī describes the assassination of al-Mutawakkil with some sympathy for the victim, it seems. When he notes that al-Mutawakkil's palace was demolished after his death, and that his canal project was never completed, this comes more as a statement of fact and sad comment on the frailty of grand human designs than as a judgment upon al-Mutawakkil himself.

Ṭabarī studiously transmits the material he received, preserv-

ing different points of view, various aspects and possibilities. He does not strain to give a consistent account; he strives to give conflicting versions a hearing. He is, of course, selective, as any historian must be. For example, he admits that he did not wish to relate unseemly things about al-Mutawakkil, which his son al-Muntaṣir had told a group of jurists. And he states that he recounted the story of al-Mutawakkil's assassination only in part. Some things the reader is not supposed to know.

As for the rest, the reader must often draw his own conclusions and offer his own interpretation. Ṭabarī gives different accounts of the same event much as he offers diverse interpretations of a verse in his Qur'an commentary. A true interpretation, a final authorized version, need not be spelled out. It may be elicited from the various traditions and reports that are handed down, if at all. The historian, like the Ḥadīth scholar, is primarily obliged to preserve traditions for posterity. Ṭabarī was no more disturbed by contradictions in rival accounts than was the Biblical narrator. The value of this technique was commented upon by I. Goldziher long ago: "[Ṭabarī's] method of ranking together, in an Oriental manner, the various and often contradictory items of his information, instead of amalgamating his inferences from them into a compact unity, is sure to diminish its literary value but for that it enhances its usefulness in the matter of sources, by having preserved many of them in their literal texts, without which we should be compelled to use unilateral information only" (Goldziher, "Historiography," *Gesammelte Schriften*, III, 361).

Ṭabarī occasionally nudges the reader gently to understand the significance of events. He demonstrates his brand of sophistication by clever juxtaposition of material and by subtle understatement. The final anecdote in our narrative is a trivial one, like the final "trivial item [that] concludes [his] majestic work that deals with events that are among the greatest in world history" (Franz Rosenthal, *The History of Ṭabarī*, Vol. XXXVIII, 207, n. 978). He tells that al-Muntaṣir had promised something to his most intimate confidant—Bunān. The caliph's untimely demise left Bunān empty-handed. Ṭabarī deftly records Bunān's lament: "He died . . . and did not give me anything."

The basis of the translation is the Leiden edition. The text from

III, 1329 to 1367 was edited by M. J. de Goeje. He used two manuscripts, referred to by sigla C and O.

C = Constantinople, Köprülü 1041.

O = Oxford Bodleiana Pocock 354.

The text from III, 1367 to 1501 was edited by V. G. Rosen on the basis of the same manuscripts.

There is a considerable lacuna in Ms. O from 1358.12 to 1410.8 (232–237 A.H.).

Professor Stephen Humphreys kindly shared with me information about pertinent manuscripts found in Istanbul.

Ms. Ahmet III 2929, vol. 12, preserved in the Topkapi Saray, a thirteenth century manuscript, is said by Humphreys to be "of superb quality and in very good condition." This manuscript was used by Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm for his edition of the text that concerns us (Cairo edition, vol. IX). The manuscript preserves some valuable readings as well as material that does not appear in Mss. C and O. For example, it contains a long passage at III, 1497 that does not appear in the recension preserved by Mss. C and O. There is reason to believe that the passage properly belongs to the text and is not an addition. I have used Ibrāhīm's edition for variant readings from this manuscript, to which Ibrāhīm gives the siglum A.

Esad Efendi 2085, housed in the Süleymaniye, covers the years 224–251, which is pertinent to our material (the years 227–248). However, according to Humphreys, it is late (fourteenth century?) manuscript and does not add anything of importance, while abbreviating personal names and omitting some lines of poetry.

Ibrāhīm also used Ms. Dār al-Kutub 1602 Ta'rikh, to which he gives the siglum D.

The notes in the Leiden edition begin to give variant readings at III, 1353.6 from Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī's *Kitāb al-awrāq fī akhbār āl al-'Abbās wa-ash'ārihim*, preserved in a Leningrad manuscript that was identified and used in connection with Ṭabarī by V. R. Rosen. (See V. I. Belayev, in the *Proceedings of the 24th International Congress of Orientalists*, held in Munich in 1957.)

The *Kitāb al-awrāq* covers the years from 227 to 256, and is

therefore most relevant to our text. I have cited al-Šūlī from the notes to the Leiden edition.

In addition, readings from al-'Aynī's *'Iqd al-jumān fī ta'rīkh ahl al-zamān* are cited (from manuscript) beginning at III, 1369.18 and will be cited from the Leiden edition apparatus.

Fragmenta historicorum arabicorum, II, ed. M. J. de Goeje, which covers the years 196 to 251, follows Ṭabarī's text very closely and is useful for variant readings, as is Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī al-ta'rīkh*.

Several friends and colleagues were generous with aid and advice, and I wish to express my gratitude to them. Professor Jacob Lassner was helpful in many ways. He clarified points of terminology, lent me books from his library in an hour of need, and edited the manuscript with professional skill. Professor Franz Rosenthal made many valuable improvements. A discussion with him was enlightening vis-à-vis the manuscript situation. This was then supplemented by Professor Stephen Humphreys, whose information about manuscripts in Istanbul is gratefully acknowledged here. My colleague Professor Joseph Sadan sat over the poetry with me and made many beneficial suggestions.

The project could not have been completed without the help and support of my wife, Roberta.

Joel L. Kraemer



Abbreviations



- BSOAS: Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
EI¹: Encyclopaedia of Islam, first edition
EI²: Encyclopaedia of Islam, new edition
GAS: Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums. See Sezgin
IJMES: International Journal of Middle East Studies
JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient
JSS: Journal of Semitic Studies
JRAS: Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
RSO: Rivista degli studi orientali
SI: Studia Islamica
WZKM: Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
ZDMG: Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

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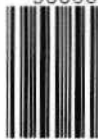
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VOLUME XXXV

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THE CALIPHATES OF AL-MUSTAʿĪN AND AL-MUʿTAZZ

A.D. 862–869/A.H. 248–255



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(Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

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Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It will also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of

the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

Ehsan Yar-Shater



Translator's Foreword



The period covered in this volume is that of the upheaval following the assassination of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, who ruled from 847–861. Within eight years or so, three caliphs came to power only to be murdered by the same group of army officers that murdered al-Mutawakkil. The first of these caliphs, al-Muntaṣir, who survived barely a year, falls outside the scope of this volume. The caliphate of al-Musta'in (862–866) and that of al-Mu'tazz (866–869) are the concern here.

The period covered by al-Ṭabarī highlights the accelerated breakdown of centralized authority and the formation of local petty-states within the larger 'Abbāsīd polity. Appointed by the caliph, and nominally loyal to him, the local governors were, in effect, semi-autonomous in conducting their affairs. Moreover, the caliphs had become totally dependent on the slave army that had initially been recruited to support caliphal authority—so dependent, that the military leaders decided the fate of the central authority. The commanders, mainly of Central Asian Turkish extraction—such as Waṣīf and Bughā—survived the successive changes of rulers, and often they were actively involved in plotting the downfall of a particular caliph. The caliph has been duly immortalized by the following lines:

[Behold] a caliph in a cage,
between Waṣīf and Bughā

Repeating what they say to him,
as the parrot itself would repeat.

In this period the caliphate, as an institution, was undergoing its critical test in the face of the military power which was by then based on professional foreign recruits. The tension between the "legitimate" power, as represented by the caliphate, and the "real" power, as represented by the military, had not yet resolved itself into a complementary mode of sharing authority; each party seems to have been totally preoccupied with plotting to control the other, or to overcome it if need be.

As Waṣīf and Bughā made and broke caliphs, they created a political and military infrastructure that paralleled the formal government. They groomed their sons for political power, handing over to them the military command they once held. Within the seven years covered in this volume, control of the regular army was passed on from Waṣīf and Bughā to their respective sons Ṣāliḥ b. Waṣīf and Mūsā b. Bughā. Having assimilated the lessons of clientage, the two power-brokers tightened their alliance by marital bonds when Bughā's daughter was given in marriage to Waṣīf's son.

The most significant episode of the time was the civil war between al-Musta'in and al-Mu'tazz. Economically, the conflict was, at the very least, extremely disruptive. The description of the events is rich with references to the cost of the war. We are even told the details of payments made to soldiers to fight, or to guard somebody, as well as the costs for an entire campaign. We are also informed that the total cost of government for a single year had become equal to the tax revenues (*kharāj*) of the whole realm for two years. Moreover, the professional soldiers fighting in the mid-ninth century no longer conducted war for ideological or religious reasons as did earlier Islamic armies. They fought for private gain. Indeed, their demands are echoed with every event. The caliph was always asked to produce additional service pay and bonuses. As traditional loyalties eroded, the central authorities, with increasing frequency, gave approval to political and monetary arrangements over which they could exercise no effective control. Critical positions were bought and sold, further accelerating the decline of centralized authority.

Such is the larger picture contained within these pages. The careful reader will also note myriad details that reflect the more prosaic aspects of life, for, here as elsewhere, the narratives of al-Ṭabarī are rich in allusions to daily life.

The Revolt of the Zanj
Volume XXXVI
Translated by David Waines

The present volume of al-Ṭabarī's monumental history covers the years 255-265/869-878, the first half of the reign of the Abbasid caliph al-Mu'tamid in Sāmarrā. Although the decade was one of relative calm in the capital, compared with the anarchy of the years immediately preceding, danger signals were flashing in territories adjacent to the imperial heartlands. Chief among them was the revolt of the Zanj, the narrative of which occupies the bulk of the present volume.

A people of semi-servile status, the Zanj, who were based in the marshlands of southern Iraq, were led by a somewhat shadowy and mysterious figure claiming Shi'ite descent, 'Alī b. Muḥammad. Their prolonged revolt against the central authorities was not crushed until 269/882.

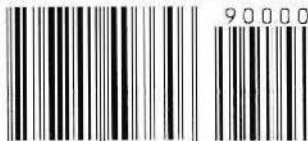
Al-Ṭabarī's account of these momentous events is unique in both the quality and the quantity of his information. He himself was present in Baghdad during the years of the revolt, and he was thus able to construct his story from reports by numerous eyewitnesses. The result is a detailed narrative that brings alive for the modern reader the main personalities and engagements of the revolt.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ
AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXVI

The Revolt of the Zanj
A.D. 869–879/A.H. 255–265



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī

(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XXXVI

The Revolt of the Zanj

translated and annotated
by

David Waines

Lancaster University

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Preface



THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Tā'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839–923), here rendered as *The History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Al-Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation contains a biography of al-Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work. It also provides information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 39 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Al-Ṭabarī very often quotes his sources verbatim and traces the chain of transmission (*isnād*) to an original source. The chains of transmitters are, for the sake of brevity, rendered by only a dash (—)

between the individual links in the chain. Thus, "According to Ibn Ḥumayd—Salamah—Ibn Ishāq" means that al-Ṭabarī received the report from Ibn Ḥumayd, who said that he was told by Salamah, who said that he was told by Ibn Ishāq, and so on. The numerous subtle and important differences in the original Arabic wording have been disregarded.

The table of contents at the beginning of each volume gives a brief survey of the topics dealt with in that particular volume. It also includes the headings and subheadings as they appear in al-Ṭabarī's text, as well as those occasionally introduced by the translator.

Well-known place names, such as, for instance, Mecca, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Damascus, and the Yemen, are given in their English spellings. Less common place names, which are the vast majority, are transliterated. Biblical figures appear in the accepted English spelling. Iranian names are usually transcribed according to their Arabic forms, and the presumed Iranian forms are often discussed in the footnotes.

Technical terms have been translated wherever possible, but some, such as *dirham* and *imām*, have been retained in Arabic forms. Others that cannot be translated with sufficient precision have been retained and italicized, as well as footnoted.

The annotation aims chiefly at clarifying difficult passages, identifying individuals and place names, and discussing textual difficulties. Much leeway has been left to the translators to include in the footnotes whatever they consider necessary and helpful.

The bibliographies list all the sources mentioned in the annotation.

The index in each volume contains all the names of persons and places referred to in the text, as well as those mentioned in the notes as far as they refer to the medieval period. It does not include the names of modern scholars. A general index, it is hoped, will appear after all the volumes have been published.

For further details concerning the series and acknowledgments, see Preface to Volume I.

Ehsan Yar-Shater

**To Martin Hinds,
in memory of
a long
and
valued
friendship**



Abbreviations



EI¹: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, first edition. 4 volumes and supplement. Leiden: 1913–42.

EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition. Leiden and London, 1960–.



Translator's Foreword



The present volume of Ṭabarī's voluminous history covers the years 255–65/869–79. It deals with some of the most dramatic events, if not of the entire *History*, certainly of the lifetime of the historian himself. Ṭabarī was already a mature scholar of about thirty when al-Muhtadī became caliph in 255/868 and the leader of the Zanj commenced his uprising in the very heartland of the 'Abbāsīd domains, southern Iraq. These events marked a most severe test for the caliphate and were part of a prolonged internal crisis, not only political in nature, but economic and social as well, a crisis from which the 'Abbāsīds never fully recovered.¹

The seat of the caliphate was still at Sāmarrā, where the Caliph al-Mu'taṣim had transferred affairs of state from Baghdad in 221/836. The move was occasioned by the desire to settle his new Turkish elite military forces and thus avoid tensions between them and the older established political and commercial sections of Baghdad's population. However, the concentration of Turks in Sāmarrā helped foster rivalries among them, as well as struggles between them and their masters, the caliphs. The assassination of al-Mutawakkil (247/861) ushered in a period of anarchy that came to an end only with the death of al-Muhtadī (255/868), when the Turkish leaders felt more secure of their position within the state apparatus. The new caliph, al-Mu'tamid (with the invaluable support of his brother Abū Aḥmad al-Muwaffaq), remained on the caliphal throne in Sāmarrā for more than twenty years and died a natural death, in con-

1. See D. Waines, "The Crisis of the 'Abbāsīd Third Century."

trast to the violent deaths of the five previous caliphs in the space of a decade.

But, although a period of relative tranquillity began in the capital, danger signals were flashing in territories adjacent to the imperial heartlands. The situation in Sāmarrā, which had paralyzed central government, had allowed provincial dissent to emerge into the open. Ṭabari deals here with one such expression of dissent in the career of Ya'qūb b. al-Layth, a coppersmith (al-ṣaffār) who, having become master of the province of Sīstān, next moved to challenge the Ṭāhirids of Khurāsān, long-standing supporters of the 'Abbāsids both in the east and in Baghdad. The central government attempted to win Ya'qūb's support by granting him the governorship of several eastern regions, but a greater danger then arose when he marched westward toward al-Ahwāz and advanced upon Baghdad itself. Ultimately this particular danger was averted but not before it had seemed possible that Ya'qūb might join forces with 'Alī b. Muḥammad and his army of the Zanj in the southern marshlands (*baṭā'ih*) of Iraq.

The Zanj revolt occupies the bulk of the narrative in the present volume, from its tentative beginnings in 255/869 through the traumatic capture of al-Baṣrah in 257/871 to the sacking of Wāsiṭ in 264/878. The period covered here, in fact, marks what Alexandre Popovic has correctly called the first distinct phase of the revolt.² The movement was crushed only when the Zanj capital, Mukh-tārah, fell to al-Muwaffaq's forces in 269/882 and the Zanj leader died the following year. In all, the revolt had occupied the central government's attention for fifteen years.

Ṭabari's account of these events is of primary importance, "tant par la qualité que par la quantité de ses informations," as Popovic acknowledges.³ Ṭabari's skills as a historian are apparent from the manner in which he has constructed his account around reports from those who participated in or witnessed the events recorded. He also displays the storyteller's touch in his inclusion of certain selected anecdotes that bring the narrative to life. My favorite is the picture of a fleeing Zanj soldier who attempts to halt the advance of his pursuer first by tossing his armor at him and finally by trying to stop him with a metal field-oven that he had been carrying. More-

2. A. Popovic, *La révolte des esclaves en Iraq au III/IX siècle*, 83.

3. Popovic, 13.

over, Ṭabari seems to have been living in Baghdad through at least some of the period of the revolt, as is attested in his brief account of the serial murderer of women who was captured and executed, and whose corpse was publicly displayed in the city, and more particularly in his mention of having been present at the departure of al-Muwaffaq's large and well-equipped army to engage the Zanj in the south. Ṭabari, for the most part, avoids making judgments on the persons and events he is dealing with, yet he cannot restrain himself entirely from expression of feeling on such momentous events. For example, until the infamous incident of the "Day of the Barges" outside al-Baṣrah, he refers to 'Alī b. Muḥammad as the Zanj leader; thereafter, however, 'Alī is designated "the enemy of God," "the cursed one," and, most frequently, simply *al-khabīth* "the abominable one."

A brief comment on the annotation is apposite here. The primary importance of Ṭabari's account, as already noted, lies in the mass of detail unique to him. Some personal names and place names, especially in the account of developments within the Zanj camp, occur only here and often only once, which makes complete identification virtually impossible. As far as possible, I have cited the works of Le Strange for the identification of place names, as readers of this translation may wish to pursue certain points in a language accessible to them. Tribal names have generally, been left unannotated. References to earlier passages in the *History* are confined to providing a fuller context for events at the beginning of this translation, linking them with earlier or alternative accounts of the same incidents or with immediate antecedent events. The labor of this translation would have been much greater but for the exhaustive study of the revolt by Popovic; my indebtedness to him will be evident from the footnotes.

It remains for me to thank those who have kindly responded to pleas for assistance on points of obscurity and difficulty in the text. To Professor C. E. Bosworth, Basim Musallam, Nasser Tuwaim, and Goudah al-Batanuni I offer gratitude. A more special thanks is owed to the editor, Ehsan Yar-Shater, for reviewing the text and to Everett Rowson for his painstaking scrutiny of the translation, his corrections, and numerous helpful suggestions. And finally, a word of appreciation to Estelle Whelan for her unfailing good humor at moments of mutual vexation.

David Waines

The 'Abbāsid Recovery
Volume XXXVII
Translated by Philip M. Fields

This volume of *Tabarī's* annals deals almost exclusively with the final stages of the Zanj revolt, the most serious external challenge faced by the central authorities in the last half of the third/ninth century. The rebellion, which began as an 'Alid uprising, but soon gave way to Khārijite influences, was a movement that attracted the disenfranchised elements of society in lower Iraq. Their battle against the tested armies of the Caliphate continued over three decades. And while the Zanj were never able to translate their localized successes into any decisive victory, they caused widespread chaos and great concern for those who had a vested interest in political and economic stability.

In many respects, the Zanj resemble modern revolutionary movements that live off the countryside, and harass the authorities. They emerged occasionally for conventional battles, but, more often than not they resorted to unconventional warfare, taking advantage of the extremely difficult terrain in the marshy areas of the region that gave rise to them. To defeat them, the government armies had to improvise new tactics and a strategy based on the lessons of early defeats.

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AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXVII

The 'Abbāsīd Recovery

THE WAR AGAINST THE ZANJ ENDS

A.D. 879–893/A.H. 266–279



The History of al-Ṭabarī

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk)

VOLUME XXXVII

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In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabari's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

Preface

THE HISTORY OF PROPHETS AND KINGS (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Ab Ja'far Muhammad b. Jarr al-Ṭabarī (839-923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

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Translator's Foreword

This work comprises the second part of the reign of the caliph al-Mu'tamid (r. 256–79/870–92). It centers on the struggle against the Zanj revolt which had been ravaging the south of Iraq since 255/868. The revolt was fomented by black slaves working in the saline areas of lower Mesopotamia to remove the salt sands and brine (*sibākh*) and open the area up to cultivation. The slaves were led by one 'Alī b. Muḥammad, who is termed al-Khabīth (the Abominable), al-Khā'in (the Traitor), and "enemy of God" in the chronicles. After the Zanj pillaged and looted Baṣra, Ahwāz, Ubullah, Wāṣiṭ, and disrupted the economies of the approaches to the capital, Mu'tamid summoned his brother al-Muwaffaq from Mecca to conduct the campaign against the rebellion. With various signs of discontent and secessionist sentiment growing in the area, al-Muwaffaq's mission was an important one indeed; the preservation of the caliphate was at stake.

The battle between the Zanj rebels and the forces of the caliph was fought on a riverain area below Baṣra composed of mud flats, rivers, canals, and swamps many of which are no longer in evidence. The terrain was affected by the ebb and flow of sea water and mud. Al-Muwaffaq, assisted by his son (who later became the caliph al-Mu'taḍid), studied the terrain carefully and applied a policy aimed at dividing the rebel forces. He offered generous conditions to those who agreed to give up the rebellion: such concessions as amnesty, safe conduct, security, robes of honor, stipends, and integration into caliphal government forces and operations. These offers were advertised, and those who accepted them were paraded before the remain-

ing enemy forces. The Abominable was even approached but the message remained unanswered. Both sides demonstrated great valor and ingenuity in the river battles in erecting and destroying earthen dams, bridges, and walls among the canals and on the adjacent land.

The Zanj had their own strongholds and villages, e.g., al-Manī'ah (the Impregnable), Manṣūrah, Mukhtārah, Zanj headquarters, and, during the course of their operations, the forces of the caliph established their own city al-Muwaffaqiyah. al-Muwaffaq's forces blocked sea approaches to the rebel towns. When government peace offers failed to dislodge the rebels, the struggle became more brutal as heads and limbs were paraded before the enemy. The Abominable's vizier was bent on surrender, but he failed to convince his master of the inevitability of their end.

The final assault on the rebels was signaled by a black banner and a trumpet. Al-Muqaffaq besieged Mukhtārah which fell in 269/882. The final battles featured chemical warfare (naphtha) that ignited fires in the enemy's wooden structures, bridges, and ships. Reputedly fifty thousand imperial troops with 400 vessels opposed forces six times as numerous (these figures may be subject to the customary exaggeration). After the brutal suppression of the revolt, much was made of the propaganda value of the thousands of women prisoners (among them 'Alid matrons) who were liberated by caliphal forces, which included both blacks and whites, Turks, Khazars, Greeks, and peoples from northern Iran (Daylam and Ṭabaristān) and from Africa. The struggle between al-Muwaffaq and the Abominable became the subject of many poems that Ṭabarī has recorded in this volume. One aftermath of the struggle that demonstrates just how sensitive the government was to any remaining pro-Zanj sentiment among the populace was that imprisoned Zanj leaders in Wāsiṭ paid with their lives, when serenading of a political nature was heard.

In this volume, the general trends and currents in 'Abbāsīd history, midway in its course, are seen. The caliph lived at Samarrā, which had served as the capital for half a century (since 224/838), while the imperial governmental machine was

split between Samarrā and Baghdad. Both, however, evinced an atmosphere redolent of endless intrigues, plots, and secessions.

The eastern empire in Iran was shaken by local dynasts (the Ṭahirids and Ṣaffarids); in the west, Syria and Egypt were ever more bent on self-rule (under Ibn Ṭūlūn and his son Khumārahayh). Frictions among officials and petty revolts instigated by tribes and pretenders were also rife. These kept officials in the central administration very busy. Ṭabarī specifically mentions that Ibn Ṭūlūn formed a plot to abduct the caliph and bring him to Egypt (273/886). Signs of unrest were also evidenced by the caliph's public cursing of the various disturbers of law and order.

In Mecca, clashes and bloodshed occurred when supporters of the sundry factions converged during pilgrimage season. In other cities, revolts broke out and mobs attacked monasteries. A kind of censorship on preachers and booksellers was implemented to prevent provocative theological debates and fermentation in Baghdad.

Ṭabarī also chronicles the corruption that characterized the mid-'Abbāsīd period. With all the demands made on it by corrupt officials and the needs of the military, the treasury was often empty. To remedy the poor fiscal situation, the government would often levy punitive taxes on grandees.

This volume also foreshadows events to come by tracing the origins of the powerful Ismā'īlī movement. Regrettably, Ṭabarī does not offer data about the aspirations, plans, and ideology of the rebellion.

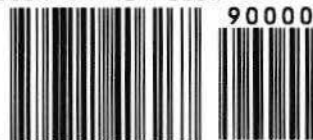
The Return of the Caliphate
to Baghdad
Volume XXXVIII
Translated and Annotated by
Franz Rosenthal

The concluding pages of al-Ṭabarī's *History* cover the caliphates of al-Muṭaḍid and al-Muktafī and the beginning of the reign of al-Muqtadir—together a period of 23 turbulent years in world history. Although al-Ṭabarī has woven skillful narratives and quoted important documents verbatim, much of the information consists of brief notes jotted down by an observant and well-placed contemporary who witnessed the events as they occurred. The reporting is thus both vivid and, within limits, historically reliable. Happenings at court, military activities on the northern and eastern frontiers of the empire, and the difficulties caused by the Qarmatian movement are all brought to life in this volume.



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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

VOLUME XXXVIII

The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad

**THE CALIPHATES OF AL-MUṬAḌID, AL-MUKTAFI
AND AL-MUQTADIR**

A.D. 892-915/A.H. 279-302



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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOL XXXVIII

**THE RETURN OF THE CALIPHATE
TO BAGHDAD**

Translated and annotated
by

Franz Rosenthal

YALE UNIVERSITY

State University of New York Press

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Acknowledgements

In 1971 the General Editor proposed to the UNESCO to include a translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* in its Collection of Representative Works. UNESCO agreed, but the Commission in charge of Arabic works favored other priorities. Deeming the project worthy, the Iranian Institute of Translation and Publication, which collaborated with UNESCO, agreed to undertake the task. After the upheavals of 1979, assistance was sought from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The invaluable encouragement and support of the Endowment is here gratefully acknowledged.

The General Editor wishes to thank sincerely also the participating scholars, who have made the realization of this project possible; the Board of Editors for their selfless assistance; Professor Franz Rosenthal for his many helpful suggestions in the formulation and application of the editorial policy; Professor Jacob Lassner for his painstaking and meticulous editing; and Dr. Susan Mango of the National Endowment for the Humanities for her genuine interest in the project and her advocacy of it.

Preface

The History of Prophets and Kings (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (839-923), here rendered as the *History of al-Ṭabarī*, is by common consent the most important universal history produced in the world of Islam. It has been translated here in its entirety for the first time for the benefit of non-Arabists, with historical and philological notes for those interested in the particulars of the text.

Ṭabarī's monumental work explores the history of the ancient nations, with special emphasis on biblical peoples and prophets, the legendary and factual history of ancient Iran, and, in great detail, the rise of Islam, the life of the Prophet Muḥammad, and the history of the Islamic world down to the year 915. The first volume of this translation will contain a biography of Ṭabarī and a discussion of the method, scope, and value of his work, and also provide information on some of the technical considerations that have guided the work of the translators.

The *History* has been divided here into 38 volumes, each of which covers about two hundred pages of the original Arabic text in the Leiden edition. An attempt has been made to draw the dividing lines between the individual volumes in such a way that each is to some degree independent and can be read as such. The page numbers of the original in the Leiden edition appear on the margins of the translated volumes.

Each volume has an index of proper names. A general index volume will follow the publication of the translation volumes.

Ehsan Yar-Shater

Translator's Foreword

Ṭabarī was some fifty years old when al-Muʿtaḍid became caliph. He was well past seventy in the year his *History*, as we know it, was published. During the intervening years, he was a famous, if somewhat controversial, personality. Among the figures of his age, he had access to sources of information equal to anyone, except, perhaps, those who were directly connected with decision-making within the government. Most, if not all, the materials for the histories of al-Muʿtaḍid, al-Muktafī, and the early years of al-Muqtadir were collected by him about the time the reported events took place. His accounts are as authentic as one can expect from any pre-modern age.

Time and again, the author shows himself to be a true historian by recognizing the paramount importance of documents and the need to reproduce them exactly. His literary taste comes occasionally to the fore as in the anecdote of the woman in search of her son among the Qarmaṭians; it captures the flavor of the general reaction to the Qarmaṭian danger better than anything else would. On the whole, however, his presentation of historical material is concise. It consists mostly of short notes written down in contemporary language and without editorial comment. The scope of the information provided by Ṭabarī for this period is thus limited, but its quality is unique.

The events chronicled in this volume concern the reigns of the father and older brother of the teenage youth during whose reign Ṭabarī published his work. Many of the men involved in the events, or members of their families, were still alive and active and no doubt concerned with their reputations. Ṭabarī seems to be remarkably candid, but we also encounter some obvious reticence dictated by prudence. His historical judgement may not always have been colored merely by his closeness to events. We also do not know how much he simply omitted, when he put together his notes, in order to avoid giving offense or risking misinterpretation.

The long poem of Ibn al-Muʿtazz on the reign of his cousin al-Muʿtaḍid is even closer to the sources and events than Ṭabarī's

work. Its poetical form naturally determined the character, and limited the extent, of the information it conveys. The great historical work of 'Ubaydallāh b. Aḥmad b. Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, who died only a few years after Ṭabarī,¹ is not preserved. What little we know of it is based on sparse quotations in later authors (which have yet to be collected). A biography of al-Mu'taḍid transmitted in the family of Thābit b. Qurrah is also lost.² Most of the other historians writing on the events of al-Mu'taḍid's reign appear later in the tenth century. Among the earliest is Mas'ūdī who used sources other than those of Ṭabarī. But the bulk of actual information on al-Mu'taḍid's caliphate was derived by some tenth-century historians and practically all those later authors who wrote works on general history from Ṭabarī. The sketchy picture he presents can, however, be supplemented by a large amount of enormously valuable information to be found in other kinds of sources. The situation is substantially the same with respect to the reign of al-Muktafī. Beginning with the caliphate of al-Muqtadir, the number of widely available, relevant historical sources greatly increased, as was noted already by Mas'ūdī³.

The publication history of Ṭabarī's work is significant for understanding the section translated here. Until the year 294(906-7), the author lectured on the material that ultimately became the sections on Umayyad and 'Abbāsīd history. He discontinued teaching and lecturing on this material when al-Muqtadir became caliph, but he seemingly worked on it for its eventual inclusion in the work now before us.⁴ Further data available to us are essentially as follows:

According to al-Farghānī [b. 282(895-6), d. 362(972-3)], Ṭabarī's work ended with the year 302. It was finished on Wednesday, Rabī' II 26, 303 (Wednesday, November 8, 915).⁵ Thus, on that date, a complete copy, or copies, of it were ready for publication. We do not know the publication procedure that was adopted in this particular case. Following known precedents, we can assume that a large number of scribes, both private entrepreneurs and library

¹See *El*², s. v. Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr.

²See Rosenthal, "From Arabic Books and Manuscripts IV," 138.

³*Murūj*, VIII, 249, ed. Pellat, V, 193 f.

⁴See Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. Margoliouth, VI, 444f., ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 70.

⁵Yāqūt, *Irshād*, ed. Margoliouth, VI, 426, ed. Rifā'ī, XVIII, 44.

employees, prepared a number of copies simultaneously for sale and distribution, as ordered by interested private and public figures and, perhaps, booksellers. Al-Farḡhānī, it may be noted, was the author of a continuation of Ṭabarī's work.⁶ More important in this connection, he also transmitted a recension of the text.⁷ It remains to be investigated whether his recension is the one presented by most of the manuscripts available to us, as seems likely.

Still from the tenth century, but from close to its end, we have the information to be found in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm. According to him, Ṭabarī's dictation of the *History* stopped in 302.⁸

Our next source is over two centuries later and thus has hardly more authority than the preserved manuscripts. Ibn al-Athīr [555-630(1160-1233)] states that Ṭabarī's work ends in 302, but that in some manuscripts he had found it continuing to the following year. However, this continuation, Ibn al-Athīr informs us, was said to be an addition not belonging to the work (and thus not originating with Ṭabarī).⁹

Ibn al-Athīr's somewhat younger contemporary, (Ibn) al-Qifṭī [568-646(1172-1248)], speaks of the year 309 as the final year of the *History*.¹⁰ Perhaps this should not simply be discounted as a mere slip of the pen or as speculation based upon the fact that Ṭabarī's death took place in 310. It may indicate that al-Qifṭī had a recension at his disposal with additions down to the year 309.¹¹

All the manuscripts consulted (see below) conclude with the year 302. Strangely enough, Karatay's catalogue of the manuscripts in the Topkapısarayı Library in İstanbul, no. 5735, indicates that the manuscript described (Revan Köşk 1555=our Ms. R) contained events from 255 to 298. This is not correct. Ms. R continues through the year 302. I have no explanation for the statement in the catalogue.

Among the historians who wrote during the first century after Ṭabarī's death, 'Arīb used the *History* faithfully to the year 299,

⁶See Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 82.

⁷As stated in the beginning of Ms. Topkapısarayı Ahmet III 2929/1. See Ibrāhīm's Cairo edition of Ṭabarī, I, Introduction, 31.

⁸*Fihrist*, 234, ll. 24 f.

⁹See Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ed. Tornberg, VIII, 68.

¹⁰See al-Qifṭī, 110f., translated in Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*², 81-3.

¹¹See below, xvii f., on the addition concerning the death of al-Ḥallāj.

but the text at his disposal does not seem to extend beyond that date. Hamadhānī's continuation of Ṭabarī shows no clear evidence that he was familiar with the text beyond 295. This is somewhat surprising, since some of the information from those years might have greatly appealed to him. Similarly, Miskawayh abruptly discontinues quoting from Ṭabarī beginning with the reign of al-Muqtadir, although he cites him consistently and almost exclusively up to that point. He may have felt that the more substantial sources at his disposal from the year 295 on deserved to be followed as exclusively as Ṭabarī was followed for earlier years. Bal'ami's Persian translation has been said to stop with the year 295,¹² but it is not certain that the preserved translation allows any conclusion as to the breakoff date for the manuscripts of the *History* available to him; further study of Bal'ami's work is called for. The twelfth-century Ibn al-Jawzī was familiar with Ṭabarī's work down to the year 300, and possibly to 301,¹³ as we might expect. But it may be noted that his first quotation from the history of Thābit b. Sinān concerns the year 296,¹⁴ and that Ṭabarī no longer appears to have been an important source for him regarding events of 295 and later.

The evidence cited allows of no certain conclusions. It may be that there existed recensions of Ṭabarī's work that ended before the year 302. On the other hand, recensions that included additions beyond the year 302 may have also circulated. The problem of such additions deserves special attention.¹⁵ At the time his work was published Ṭabarī may have looked forward to making further additions, as authors often do. The colophon of Ms. B(erlin),¹⁶ which is in a poor state of preservation, somehow seems to indicate this intention. It apparently refers to "later events (*muta'akhhir*)" and concludes with "if God postpones the final term (death)." However, *muta'akhhir* is likely to be a corruption of *min khabar*, and the context of the statement

¹²See Massignon, *Passion*², IV, 13 n. 1.

¹³*Muntaẓam*, VI, 115.

¹⁴*Muntaẓam*, VI, 80. Thābit's work is, in fact, said to have started with the reign of al-Muqtadir, see Šafadī, *Wāfi*, X, 463.

¹⁵See Ṭabarī, *Introductio* etc., XVf.

¹⁶Ms. C(onstantinople, Köprülü, I, 1042) breaks off shortly before the end of the work and thus does not contain the colophon.

referring to continued life is doubtful. It does not appear in R which has preserved what seems to be the full text of the badly mutilated version in B. The colophon in R reads:

"Abū Ja'far Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī says: All the information mentioned by us with an indication of transmission and oral sources which we have included in this book—I mean the book entitled "A Short History of the Messengers, Kings, and Caliphs"—to this very day, month, and year is as we have included it in the book. All the information we have left without mentioning transmission and referring to a transmission [its transmitters?] belongs to information which is generally and widely known through continuous transmission and is generally familiar to those privy to it. You all should know this! (... *mā ḍammannā hādihā al-kitāb-a'nī al-kitāb al-musammā Mukhtaṣar ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk wa-al-khulafā'-ilā ḥaythu intahaynā ilayhi min yawminā min shahrinā min sanatinā hādhihī mimmā kāna fīhi min khabar dhakarnāhu bi-riwāyah wa-samā' fa-huwa 'alā mā ḍammannā al-kitāb wa-mā kāna min dhālika mimmā akhlalnā min dhikr al-riwāyah wa-nisbatihī ilā riwāyah* [read: *ruwātihi*?] *fa-huwa min al-khabar al-mustafīd al-muntashir alladhī tawātarat bihī al-akhbār wa-istafāḍat bihī 'inda ahlihī fa-i'lamū dhālika*).

Ṭabarī thus alerts the reader that where the source situation is explained, the source in question was faithfully followed by him. The lack of any such indication of sources, on the other hand, means that reference is made to events generally known, and in these cases, the phrasing is apparently his own. Nothing is said here about future additions. It is, however, likely that he continued taking notes and including them in his personal copy. From there, they found their way to the copyists who, by using them and other minor variations in the text, created different "recensions" or, in modern terms, successive editions slightly divergent from each other but all, in some way, having the approval of the author.

The prime example of an addition beyond the year 302 is the brief reference to the death of al-Ḥallāj which occurred in the year preceding Ṭabarī's death. The reference appears in only one

manuscript *sub anno* 301.¹⁷ Its terseness and patent lack of sympathy with the great mystic gives the impression of its coming from the hand of Ṭabarī. Of course, it cannot be ruled out entirely that someone else might have inserted it in a copy he possessed about the time the event took place. But in the absence of any indication to this effect, the preferred assumption is that Ṭabarī himself was the author of the account.

Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī concludes his quotation of passages from Ṭabarī with an item dated 305.¹⁸ It describes the discovery of a vault at the Wall of Marw. That vault contained baskets with a thousand heads, each of which had in its ear a label giving the name of the individual.¹⁹ Ḥamzah's story corresponds to a report by 'Arīb given in connection with the year 304(916-7).²⁰ The differences are, however, rather considerable and cannot be explained by the fact that the Ṭabarī quotations of Ḥamzah are usually quite free. It seems that Ḥamzah and 'Arīb used different sources. In 'Arīb's case it is unlikely that his source was Ṭabarī; for if this were so, we would be confronted with the possibility that 'Arīb's information for the years 300 to 309 may include more quotations from Ṭabarī, and this we are not prepared to concede. Ḥamzah, on the other hand, may in fact have found the information in the Ṭabarī recension used by him; yet, it is also possible that he followed some other source and failed to indicate it.

The existence of various "recensions" signaled by differences in the available manuscripts suggests that additions to and divergences from Ṭabarī's work found in later authors who used it extensively often go back to the manuscript tradition of the *History*. Obviously, omissions in otherwise literal reproductions of Ṭabarī's text do not reflect in any way an original state. In some cases, it can be argued that the additions of a later author who depended heavily on Ṭabarī were not derived from the latter's work. A major example of this is Miskawayh's report on Abū Sa'īd al-Jannābī's message to al-Mu'taḍid. The arguments that Miskawayh could

¹⁷ See below, n. 952.

¹⁸ *Annales*, I, 192.

¹⁹ For the custom of labeling an object by means of a piece of paper affixed to the ear, see text above, III, 1348.

²⁰ 'Arīb, 62f.

not have derived it from Ṭabarī are strong.²¹ Still, I am not fully convinced that this important item escaped Ṭabarī's attention altogether and that it did not somehow find its way in some form into his work. It must be admitted, though, that the only other addition in Miskawayh, a lengthy story illustrating al-Mu'taḍid's fairness,²² is very unlikely to go back to Ṭabarī. Some of the additional information found in later authors that appears to be of Ṭabarīan origin has been referred to in the notes accompanying the translation. No attempt has been made, however, to speculate about everything that could possibly be derived from the *History*. Given the nature of the evidence, much of this sort of material is highly problematic.

For the concluding portion of the work that is the subject of translation here, only two manuscripts were available to the editor of the Leiden text. In the tenth volume of his edition published in Cairo (1969), Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm reproduced the Leiden text basically unchanged, as Ibrāhīm himself stated in his foreword. The indispensable critical apparatus of the Leiden edition was discarded by him, to the extent that he failed to note that a few words in the Leiden text had no manuscript authority but were taken from the quotation in a later author.²³ Ibrāhīm nevertheless deserves our special gratitude for adding the pagination of the Leiden edition in the margin, something he unfortunately failed to do when he republished the texts of 'Arīb, Hamadhānī, and Ṭabarī's *Dhayl al-Mudhayyal* as Volume XI of his Ṭabarī text.²⁴ A third printing of Volume X, which appeared in 1977, used no new manuscript material.

The two manuscripts used in the Leiden edition are, moreover, not entirely complete. Thus, C lacks one entire folio that belonged between folios 337 and 338 of the manuscript.²⁵ The insufficiency of the manuscript material of the edition made it advisable to collate Ms. R of the Topkapısarayı. The well-tested kindness and courage of the Turkish librarians enabled me to accomplish this

²¹ See below, n. 444.

²² See Miskawayh, *Tajārib*, V, 19-23, *sub anno* 289.

²³ See below, n. 774.

²⁴ Published in Cairo, 1977.

²⁵ See text below, 95 (l. 20)-104 (l. 22).

task during a brief stay in Istanbul in June of 1981. A little time was left over for a quick look at Ms. C in the Köprülü Library, I, 1042. But I have had no microfilm to do the additional checking which is necessary.

A microfilm of Ms. B (Mq 667, Catalogue Ahlwardt 9422) was kindly provided for me by Dr. D. George and the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz in Berlin. It has enabled me to check a few passages in the Leiden edition where I thought that such checking might be well advised. The collation of Ms. B with the printed text has increased my admiration for the accuracy and acumen of the editor and the fine work done by the printer. The passages which contain errors with respect to the indication of the manuscript situation are astonishingly few, and they are very minor. Only a few had to be indicated in the notes to the translation.

While Ms. R has its measure of mistakes, it enlarges our knowledge of Ṭabarī's work. R appears to be closer to B than to C, allowing the conclusion that wherever R and C agree against B, RC may have preserved the more original wording. However, the situation is by no means clear-cut. The three manuscripts may have equally acceptable readings as the result of author's variants.

R has a number of additions not to be found in C and B, and thus they are not contained in the Leiden text. These additions appear to go back to Ṭabarī, although in most cases proof either positive or negative is unavailable. As far as I can see, no decisive clues can be derived from internal evidence. Alternative statements and repetitiveness are no proof against Ṭabarīan origin. Positive evidence for it is provided by additions of the *homoioteleuton* variety which mend scribal omissions and thus restore the more original text. Positive evidence is also provided by quotations in later authors, some of which support additions and textual variants found in R. This makes it virtually certain that the material goes back to some recension of Ṭabarī's text. Altogether, then, at the present stage of our knowledge, we are justified in considering additions that occur in any one of the manuscripts to be part of his work.

A new scholarly edition of the *History* is certainly needed, but, regrettably, none may be published soon. Therefore, it has been advisable, and even necessary, to indicate some of the textual information found in R. This has been done as unobtrusively as

possible. Words and passages enclosed by asterisks indicate additions; those enclosed in raised half square brackets indicate omissions. Not infrequently, additions and omissions in R agree with what is found in C; here the apparatus of the Leiden edition must be consulted. References to minor variations are usually meant to call attention to readings that may go back to a recension of the *History* or exhibit a preferable text. Exhaustiveness and consistency have not been attempted, although even very small and seemingly insignificant variants may illuminate the history of Ṭabarī's text and its historical importance.

The translation and annotation procedure followed in this volume needs little comment. Brackets to mark names and nouns supplied for Arabic pronouns have been avoided for the most part. The Baghdad-centrism of the work has often called for the addition of "Baghdad" where the word itself is not expressly mentioned in the text. No attention has been paid to the various ways in which dates are expressed in the Arabic text. They have been rendered in a uniform manner and occasionally expanded by the addition of the year. One-day discrepancies in the indicated day of the week have been left unchanged.²⁶ All this has been done in order to facilitate the task of the historian who may peruse these pages.

An historical commentary on subjects and events has not been attempted because there is no room for it in this volume. Every one of Ṭabarī's brief items would require a lengthy discussion in order to place it in even the most rudimentary historical context. The available standard works have been preferred for reference. Those dealing specifically with the period treated here have not been referred to systematically on each occasion. This applies, for instance, to Canard on the Byzantines (also Vasiliev, Vol. II) and the Ḥamdānids, and to Massignon and his struggle to unravel the prevailing religious situation. Similarly, one should often refer to Bowen, who attempts to encompass the political scene in Baghdad during all these years in a work which remains entertaining and worth reading, and to Glagow's careful biography of al-Mu'taḍid

²⁶See below, n. 979, for an example of the fact that dates given in one form were at times converted into another. This could easily lead to mistakes, especially in connection with dates referring to the remaining nights of months having twenty-nine days.

in which he discusses all the data provided by Ṭabarī and parallel sources, and so on.

A brief identification has been provided in the notes for each individual at his first mention in this volume. With a very few exceptions for the most prominent personalities, such as caliphs, this has been done systematically and, alas, has required some rather superfluous notes. I have not, however, succeeded in identifying every single individual mentioned in the text. The names of tribes have been left unannotated as a rule. The names of places have rarely required annotation, the principal exceptions being the names of towns in Byzantine territory and the stations of the Mecca Road. References to earlier passages in the *History* are meant to alert the reader to the likelihood that a fuller annotation may be found in connection with the translation of those passages.

In addition to the librarians in Istanbul and Berlin, I am obliged to Professor E. Birnbaum of the University of Toronto for answering my questions concerning problematic proper names suspected by me to be of Turkish origin, to Professor E. Yar-Shater of Columbia University for checking the *Tā'rīkh-e Sīstān*, not available to me, and to Professor J. Lassner of Wayne State University for his painstaking editing of my manuscript. I am very grateful to all of them, as I am to the students in my Arabic Seminar with whom I read part of the text translated here during the academic year 1978-79.

Sigla

B Ms. Berlin Mq 677

C Ms. Köprülü I, 1042

R Ms. Topkapısarayı, Revan Köşk 1555

... Additions in R

┌....┐ Omissions in R

The History of al-Ṭabarī

VOLUME XL

Index



PREPARED BY ALEX V. POPOVKIN
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF EVERETT K. ROWSON

Index
Volume XL
Prepared by Alex V. Popovkin
under the supervision of Everett K. Rowson

Completed in 1999 by a distinguished group of Arabists and historians of Islam, the annotated translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* is arguably the most celebrated chronicle produced in the Islamic lands on the history of the world and the early centuries of Islam. This fortieth volume, the *Index*, compiled by Alex V. Popovkin under the supervision of Everett K. Rowson, serves as an essential reference tool. It offers scholars and general readers convenient access to the wealth of information provided by this massive work.

The *Index* comprises not only all names of persons and places mentioned by al-Ṭabarī, with abundant cross-referencing, but also a very broad range of subject entries, on everything from "pomegranates" to forms of "punishment." The volume includes a separate index of Qur'ānic citations and allusions, as well as a list of errata and corrigenda to the entire translation.

Alex V. Popovkin is a professional indexer and **Everett K. Rowson** is Associate Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at New York University.

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THE HISTORY OF AL-ṬABARĪ

VOLUME XL

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The History of al-Ṭabarī
(*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XL

INDEX

Comprising an Index of Proper Names and
Subjects and an Index of Qur'ānic
Citations and Allusions

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under the supervision of
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Foreword

With the publication of this index volume, the annotated English translation of al-Ṭabarī's *History* (*Ta'rikh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*) in forty volumes is completed. The project began in 1979 and the last volume of the translation itself (Volume V, tr. by C. E. Bosworth) appeared in 1999.

The history of the project, the principles followed in the translation and annotation, the choice of the Leiden edition as the basis for the translation, the composition of the Board of Editors, the division of the *History* into manageable and to some degree self-contained volumes, the selection of translators-annotators, the funding of the project by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and other pertinent points, were all explained in the General Editor's Preface to Volume I, which also included a General Introduction on al-Ṭabarī and his *History* by the eminent translator of the volume, Franz Rosenthal. As for subsequent changes in the Editorial Board, Jacob Lassner was replaced by Everett Rowson in 1989, and the translations were thereafter reviewed and carefully scrutinized by him and C. E. Bosworth. Two members of the Editorial Board, Ihsan Abbas and Franz Rosenthal, regrettably passed away in 2003.

Although there is an index of proper names at the end of each volume, furnished by its translator, it was decided from the outset that a cumulative and wide-ranging index encompassing all the volumes would be a prerequisite to render the work fully serviceable to both academic researchers and interested general readers. The envisaged index would include such diverse topics as ethnic groups in the early Islamic world, specific questions of theology and law, aspects of economic and cultural life, music, architecture, and literature, battle tactics and weaponry, tribal groupings, taxation, religious heresies, Biblical history, Persian ancient history and legends, mints and coin issues. Moreover, the reader needed the assistance of a detailed and well-organized subject index covering

both the text and relevant information from the annotations, the latter embodying the results of the translators' own research and original scholarship. The usefulness of such an index cannot be sufficiently emphasized.

The initial work on this Index began immediately after the completion of the translation project itself, but the search for a competent indexer proved a lengthy one. Fortunately, Alex Popovkin, a professional indexer with a good grounding in Arabic, agreed to take on the project under the able supervision of Professor Everett Rowson, and this collaboration was carried out in an exemplary manner.

A particularly vexing problem with indexing a work like al-Ṭabarī's *History* is the complex formation of Arabic personal names, which can have up to five or six components, only some of which are regularly cited and then not always the same ones for a given individual. For instance, the name of the historian and *ḥadīth* scholar Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Nūr al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī al-Kinānī al-Miṣrī, includes a title, a teknonym (*kunya*), a given name, name of the father, the family name, attribution to a locality, attribution to a tribe, and attribution to a country. To know by which element the bearer of a name is most commonly known requires considerable knowledge of Arabic literature. For example, al-Jāḥiẓ, the famous *adab* scholar, is known by his nickname ("one with protruding eyes"), the historian Ibn Qutaybah by the name of his father, the Prophet's companion Abū Hurayra by his teknonym, the son-in-law and cousin of the Prophet 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib by his given name and his father's teknonym, the polymath al-Bīrūnī by attribution to the locale of his birth, the philosopher and physician Abū 'Alī Ibn Sīnā by a combination of his teknonym and the name of his grandfather, the mystic al-Ḥallāj by a profession ("wool-carder"), the self-styled and rebellious prophet al-Muqanna' by a sobriquet ("the veiled one"), the brave brigand-poet Ta'abbata Sharran by a characterization ("the one who carries wickedness under his arm"). Considerable sophistication and effort have been required to achieve consistency in the selection of standard names, and cross-references have been supplied generously. For the details of this and other technicalities the reader is urged to consult the Guide to the Index.

Inevitably, the volumes have not been free from some typographical errors in spite of the translators' careful proofreading. Reviews of the volumes in learned journals occasionally proposed a better reading or a more accurate rendering. The process of indexing itself brought out a few minor discrepancies among the various volumes.

The publication of the General Index also provided an opportunity to include the corrigenda for the entire series. To this purpose the scholars who had collaborated with the project were asked to provide a list of the errata that they had noticed in their published volumes. To these were added a few spotted in the course of the indexing and they were sent to the translators for checking and approval. In the case of two volumes, the list of errata was exceptionally long. This was partly due to the fact that the checking of their manuscripts had not been done as carefully as had been expected. It is hoped that in a second printing the corrections will be inserted in the texts themselves.

It is my pleasant duty to express my profound gratitude to all the scholars who have participated in this scholarly enterprise. I am most grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for its unfailing support; without its financial assistance the Project could not have been accomplished. The Project owes a great deal to Professor Everett Rowson whose incomparable editorial skills, his dedication to sound scholarship, and his exacting supervision of the indexing process have been a great asset. I cannot thank him enough for the tremendous amount of time he has spent on the Project. I would also like to express my deep appreciation to George Farr, the former Director of the Division of Preservation and Access at the NEH and Dr. Helen Agüera, Senior Program Officer in the same Division, for their unstinting encouragement and support of the Project, and would also like to thank the NEH officers who were involved in the earlier stages of the Project: Susan Mango, Dr. Martha Chomiak and Dr. Margot Backas. And finally I would like to thank Dina Amin of the Center for Iranian Studies, Columbia University, who has so ably attended to all the administrative and financial aspects of this Project.

Ehsan Yarshater, General Editor
December 22, 2005



Preface



Perhaps the magnitude and richness of a work like al-Ṭabari's *History* can be fully appreciated only when one attempts to index it. Thousands of personal names (all too many of them beginning with Muḥammad), thousands of place names (some of them otherwise unknown, and what are the vowels?), and most of all thousands of subjects alluded to, briefly elucidated, or dwelt on at length present the indexer with a formidable task. Questions about al-Ṭabari's general approach to writing history, his preconceptions, his biases, his sources and their nature, and his reliability, feed an ever growing scholarly literature; but the task of the indexer is simply to provide optimal access to the information afforded by his text. With a work of this complexity, however, even that is not so simple.

To this task Alex Popovkin has brought impressive skills, both as an indexer and as an Arabist. Taking as his starting point a collocation of the indices to individual volumes of the translation—quite varied in their approaches but mostly restricted to proper names—he has proceeded to enrich them with an extraordinary range of subject entries, keyed in large part to the translators' explanatory footnotes but also embracing many other topics, from “pomegranates” to various forms of “punishment.” Comprehensiveness in subject indexing for such a large work is of course an unattainable goal, but it has been both his and my hope that the results will offer scholars access to that crucial bit of information on a given subject that they otherwise would never have found in this sprawling text. It is in this regard that I have found both Mr. Popovkin's imaginativeness and his meticulousness most impressive.

We have both learned a great deal as well about the complexities of the Arabic personal name. Literally thousands of email messages between us have been dedicated to such questions as whether Muḥammad b. Aḥmad in volume X is the same person as Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Aḥmad in volume Y, and whether this person is al-Sulamī or al-Salmī.

We certainly have not solved all the problems, but I believe we have managed to devise a cross-referencing system that will alert readers to both the possibilities and the ambiguities when trying to track down a given individual. At the same time, we have identified, and worked out strategies for dealing with differences in individual translators' styles in coping with nomenclature, as well as pinpointing some errors, many of them due to the specific problems of individual manuscripts, that became apparent only by comparing different sections of the work. Except for minor vocalization problems, such errors are noted in the *Errata et Emendanda* section of this volume.

Publication of this index volume represents the completion of a project of extraordinary scope, and an instance of extraordinary scholarly collaboration. Over the course of twenty-five years more than thirty scholars of Islamic history have contributed to producing a fully annotated English translation of the single most important primary source in their field. It is regrettable that Professors Moshe Perlmann, W. Montgomery Watt, Ihsan Abbas, Martin Hinds, and Franz Rosenthal are no longer with us to enjoy its completion, and I am particularly saddened that that enjoyment is denied the late Estelle Whelan, who so expertly shepherded my own volume and many others through the editing process. But my greatest thanks, and those of all the participants, are reserved for Professor Ehsan Yarshater, who initially conceived the project and has overseen it from beginning to end. His unflagging dedication (and at times doggedness) have assured both the project's completion and its quality—and he has been a joy to work with. It is only his many other major contributions to the field that prevent this from being unambiguously his most outstanding one.

Everett K. Rowson

List of Volumes and Scholars

The list of the scholars who participated in the translation and annotation of the Volumes

I	General Introduction/From the Creation to the Flood	Franz Rosenthal
II	Prophets and Patriarchs	William M. Brinner
III	The Children of Israel	William M. Brinner
IV	The Ancient Kingdoms	Moshe Perlmann
V	The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakhmids, and Yemen	C. E. Bosworth
VI	Muḥammad at Mecca	W. Montgomery Watt and M. V. McDonald
VII	The Foundation of the Community	M. V. McDonald, annotated by W. Montgomery Watt
VIII	The Victory of Islam	Michael Fishbein
IX	The Last Years of the Prophet	Ismail K. Poonawala
X	The Conquest of Arabia	Fred M. Donner
XI	The Challenge to the Empires	Khalid Yahya Blankinship
XII	The Battle of al-Qādisiyyah and the Conquest of Syria and Palestine	Yohanan Friedmann
XIII	The Conquest of Iraq, Southwestern Persia, and Egypt	Gautier H. A. Juynboll
XIV	The Conquest of Iran	G. Rex Smith
XV	The Crisis of the Early Caliphate	R. Stephen Humphreys
XVI	The Community Divided	Adrian Brockett
XVII	The First Civil War	G. R. Hawting
XVIII	Between Civil Wars: The Caliphate of Mu'āwiyah	Michael G. Morony

XIX	The Caliphate of Yazid b. Mu'āwiyah	Ian K. A. Howard
XX	The Collapse of Sufyānid Authority and the Coming of the Marwānids	G. R. Hawting
XXI	The Victory of the Marwānids	Michael Fishbein
XXII	The Marwānid Restauration	Everett K. Rowson
XXIII	The Zenith of the Marwānid House	Martin Hinds
XXIV	The Empire in Transition	David Stephan Powers
XXV	The End of Expansion	Khalid Yahya Blankinship
XXVI	The Waning of the Umayyad Caliphate	Carole Hillenbrand
XXVII	The 'Abbāsīd Revolution	John Alden Williams
XXVIII	'Abbāsīd Authority Affirmed	Jane Dammen McAuliffe
XXIX	Al-Manṣūr and al-Mahdī	Hugh Kennedy
XXX	The 'Abbāsīd Caliphate in Equilibrium	C. E. Bosworth
XXXI	The War between Brothers	Michael Fishbein
XXXII	The Reunification of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate	C. E. Bosworth
XXXIII	Storm and Stress along the Northern Frontiers of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate	C. E. Bosworth
XXXIV	Incipient Decline	Joel L. Kraemer
XXXV	The Crisis of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate	George Saliba
XXXVI	The Revolt of the Zanj	David Waines
XXXVII	The 'Abbāsīd Recovery	Philip M. Fields
XXXVIII	The Return of the Caliphate to Baghdad	Franz Rosenthal
XXXIX	Biographies of the Prophet's Companions and Their Successors	Ella Landau-Tasseron



Guide to the Index



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 - 4.2 Exceptions
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5. Toponyms
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 - 7.1 Scope
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1. General

The cumulative index to *The History of al-Ṭabarī* includes both proper names and subjects. For the former, and to a very limited extent the latter, it is based on the existing indices to the individual volumes. However, numerous revisions and adjustments have been required, mostly in order to achieve consistency across volumes, so that this cumulative index should be considered as superseding the individual ones. Translators' footnotes are not indexed directly, but much of their content is made accessible through relevant subject entries keyed to al-Ṭabarī's

text. The intent has been to make this an index specifically to al-Ṭabarī's *History*, so that names mentioned only in the footnotes, for example, do not appear.

A list of Qur'ānic quotations and allusions (based on individual translators' footnotes) is provided in a separate section.

2. Transliteration and orthography

Tā' marbūṭah preceded by alif has been standardized as -āh for common nouns, -āt for proper names, e.g., *mu'ākhāh* (brotherhood bond) but Banū 'Abd Manāt.

Pairs of letters that might be mistaken for digraphs are separated by a ' sign, e.g., Abū Mus'hir, Ad'ham, Fak'hah.

Dual and sound masculine plural forms are cited in the nominative, e.g., al-Ḥaramān, al-Khallālūn (vinegar-sellers' quarter, in al-Baṣrah), excluding the traditional exceptions, e.g., al-Baḥrayn.

Compound personal names with Allāh as their second element are spelled as one word, e.g., 'Abdallāh, 'Ā'idhallāh, Hibatallāh, etc.

Dā'ūd has been standardized as Dāwūd.

Khuwārizm/Khwārizm has been standardized as Khwārazm.

3. Alphabetization

The alphabetization is word-by-word, with occasional adjustments mentioned below. When otherwise identical, common nouns and toponyms appear before personal names.

Non-sorting elements:

al-

Abū (Abī)

Banū (Banī)

Bint (bt.)

Ibn (b.) (except when followed by a common noun, e.g., *ibn al-sabil*)
 Umm (except when followed by a common noun, e.g., *umm walad*,
 Umm Abiha, Umm al-Banin)

When several non-sorting elements follow each other they appear alphabetically.

Letters without diacritics precede those with diacritics.

The few unvocalized (or partially vocalized) readings are sorted as is, e.g., B.n.j.r (? , ethnic group) appears after Bl- and before Bo-.

Dhī preceded by non-sorting elements is sorted with Dhū, so that their common identity is not broken, e.g., Ibn Dhī al-Burdayn al-Hilālī is sorted among entries beginning with Dhū.

4. Personal names

4.1. Order of elements

The normal ordering of name elements is as follows: *ism* + (b. *ism*) + (*nisbah*) (*kunyah*) (*laqab*), where the elements in parenthesis are optional, e.g., 'Amr (*mawlā* of Abū Bakr); 'Abd al-Ḥamid b. Rib'ī al-Ṭā'ī, Abū Ghānim.

4.2. Exceptions

However, when a person is traditionally best known by his *kunyah*, *nisbah*, or *laqab* (or when al-Ṭabarī does not provide an *ism*), the ordering changes accordingly, e.g., Abū Ma'bad al-Khuzā'ī; al-Farazdaq (Hammām b. Ghālib b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah); Mā' al-Samā' (Māriyah bt. 'Awf b. Jusham). In such cases the necessary cross-references are provided.

4.3. Ambiguous cases

On occasion it is uncertain whether persons mentioned by al-Ṭabarī with different name forms represent one individual or two, either due to variation in the components of the name cited or because of possible textual corruption. In such cases, the index records both variants separately, but adds a *see also* cross-reference to each entry to indicate their possible identity.

5. Toponyms

For the most part entries for toponyms are provided with identifying glosses, e.g., al-Kallā' (port and market, in al-Baṣrah). When further identification was not feasible the gloss is reduced to a generic "toponym", e.g., al-Abāriq (toponym).

6. Glosses

6.1. General principles

Glosses are used as follows:

- to distinguish otherwise identical entries by means of information provided by context or by the translators, e.g., Abū 'Umar (*kātib* of Simā al-Sharābī); Abū 'Umar (*qāḍī*);
- to supply an alternative name, or part thereof, as indicated by translators' notes, e.g., Abū Hishām al-Rifā'i (Muḥammad b. Yazīd);
- to supply the translators' rendering of the Arabic (when the Arabic form is chosen as the main entry), or the Arabic original of the translated term, e.g., Nahr Abī al-Asad (Abū al-Asad Canal); or-nithomancy (*iyāfah*);
- to provide an explanation, e.g., al-Ḥiṣnān (i.e., al-Mawṣil and Ninawā);
- to help in identifying the entry on the page, e.g., Ya'qūb b. Ibrāhīm b. Sa'd (uncle of 'Ubaydallāh b. Sa'd).

6.2. List of Arabic terms

The following Arabic terms because of variation in their rendering by the translators are left untranslated in glosses:

'*ayyār* vagabond
dihqān landlord, village head
ghulām page, servant boy
iṣbahbadh provincial military governor
jāriyah slave girl
kātib secretary
khādim eunuch, servant
khaṣī eunuch
mawlā (f. *mawlāh*) client, freedman
naqīb tribal chief

qāḍī judge

rāwī transmitter

umm walad concubine who has borne her master a child

7. Subject entries

7.1. *Scope*

Selection of entries has been discretionary and based in part on individual translators' choices, with index entries pointing to places where translators' notes supply additional information or al-Ṭabarī's text offers some substantial discussion and together with abundant cross-references maximize accessibility of al-Ṭabarī's discussion of a given topic. Comprehensiveness should not be assumed. Technical terms are a particular focus. Most common terms are indexed to their first occurrence only, or where they are discussed in translators' notes.

7.2. *English versus Arabic*

When a term has a single obvious English equivalent, the latter is selected as the main entry (with cross-references from the Arabic). In the more frequent cases of divergent translations it is the Arabic form that appears as the main entry, with the translations relegated to the glosses and appearing as cross-references, e.g., 'Ām al-Ramādah (Year of the Drought, Year of the Destruction).

8. Errors

Most errors encountered in standardizing the index across volumes pertain to the spelling and vocalization of proper names, and the line between error and simple variant is often a fuzzy one. Both glosses and cross-references have been utilized to accommodate individual translators' choices while ensuring that references to a single person or place are not fragmented. The index aspires to be as accurate as possible, staying true to al-Ṭabarī's text, and minor differences in vocalization between the index and the text are to be expected.

For a list of errors consult the Errata and Emendanda section.

9. Uncertainty about proper vocalization or identity

A question mark after a name or page reference indicates uncertainty about proper vocalization or identity, e.g., Ak.r.m (? , ethnic group) XXXIV:141; Banū Tha'labah (of Ghaṭafān) XXXIV:26?; Abān (b. Ṣāliḥ?) XXXIX:203.

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6-7 XXXII:248
9 I:168
16 XXVI:102

LXXXVII

14-15 XVIII:171
18 I:344

LXXXVIII

17-20 I:195
22-23 XVI:109

LXXXIX

1-2 VI:159
5-13 XV:136
6 XXXIII:120
10 XXIII:46
14 XXXIV:224; XXXVIII:57
24 XXXIII:189
27 XXXIX:57

XCI

9 XXIX:250

XCIII

1-2 VI:69
1-3 VI:70

XCVI

1 VI:68, 74
1-5 VI:69-70
5 I:223
18 IV:32

XCVII

3 XXXVIII:55

XCIX

7-8 XX:206
XXXIX:123

C

1 XX:206
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CI

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CIV XXII:77

CV VIII:73; XI:107
3 XXXI:142

CVII XXII:77

CIX
1-6 VI:107
6 X:81

CXI
1-5 VI:89

CXII XXXII:207
2 I:262
4 I:165



Errata et Emendanda



volume:page:line	for	read
I:295:14	al-Zabīr	al-Zubayr
I:295 n804	al-Zabīr	al-Zubayr
II:1 n6	Replace the text with: Al-Ḥasan b. Hānī' is the celebrated poet Abū Nuwās (d. circa 200/815); see <i>Et</i> ² , s.v.	
II:7:12	Darafsh Kābiyān	Dirafsh-e Kābyān
II:29 n99	16	26
II:29 n100	16	26
II:31:6-7	Salāām Abū al-Mundhir al-Naḥawī	Sallām Abū al-Mundhir al-Naḥwī
II:32:15	Huzāl	Hazzāl
II:32:16	Marthid	Marthad
II:32:17-18	Jalhamah	Julhumah
II:32:18	Huzāl	Hazzāl
II:34:4, 9, 21, 25	Marthid	Marthad
II:36:22, 26	Marthid	Marthad
II:37:24	Marthid	Marthad
II:42:1-2	Abū Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān	Abū Bakr b. 'Abdallāh

II:49:10	there was a king over him,	(Nimrod) was an independent king,
II:50:18-19	and as a messenger to His worshippers	and as a messenger to His servants
II:52:25-26	he was attacked by illness. They fled from him	he was attacked by the illness from which they used to flee
II:52:31	Add note after "speak?": 143a. Ibid., 37:91f.	
II:59:12	Add note after "Hell.": 169a. Ibid., 37:97	
II:64:2:29	al-Musayyib	al-Musayyab
II:83:12	ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd	ʿAbdallāh b. Saʿīd
II:99:34-35	Ibn Luhayʿah	Ibn Lahīʿah
II:100:24-25	ʿĪsa b. Abī Najīḥ	ʿĪsā—Ibn Abī Najīḥ
II:102:18	ʿAmr	ʿUmar
II:148:4	al-Rāzayyān	al-Rāzī
II:152:16-17	ʿĪsa b. Abī Najīḥ	ʿĪsā—Ibn Abī Najīḥ
II:133:9	ʿAbadah	ʿAbdah
II:137:16	Muḥammad b. ʿAmr al-ʿAbqarī	ʿAmr b. Muḥammad al-ʿAnqazī
II:159:9	Ḥaṣīn	Ḥuṣayn
II:180:13	Ibn Sinān	Abū Sinān ^{480a}
II:180	Add note: 480a. Reading Abū Sinān for the text's Ibn Sinān.	
III:9 n64	Replace the text with: Muḥammad b. Saʿīd al-ʿAwfī, d. 276/889.	
III:21:4	she was born in al-Rayy	he was born in al-Rayy
III:28:25	al-Aṭāf	al-ʿAṭāf
III:26:9-10	that is a blemish in it.	that is a diminution in it.
III:29:8-9	nāsnās	Nasnās
III:36:24	at siesta time	at midday

III:37:31	al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd related to me—al- Qāsim	al-‘Abbās b. al-Walīd related to me—Yazīd b. Hārūn—al-Aṣṣbagh b. Zayd al-Juhanī—al- Qāsim
III:44:3	the overflow of the troughs.	the remnants of the troughs.
III:44:9-10	Abū Ḥuṣayn	Abū Ḥaṣīn
III:44 n225	Replace the text with: ‘Anbasah b. Sa’īd b. al- Ḍurays; see al-Ṭabarī, I, 226 n393.	
III:44 n226	Delete the note.	
III:90 n506	Delete the note.	
III:102:12-13	his oppression of them consisted of his having surpassed them in luxurious garments.	his oppression of them consisted of his having demanded an additional handspan of cloth.
IV:1 n1 ll. 4-6	For the title . . . , 43.	See Christensen, <i>Kayanides</i> , 43. The Arabic orthography of these names is retained throughout the translation.
IV:2 n4	Replace the text with: Siyāwakhsh, Siyāwush: see <i>El</i> ² , s. v. Siyāwush; Christensen, <i>Kayanides</i> , 79, 111f.	
IV:21:1-2	Muḥammad b. Sahl b. ‘Askar Ismā’īl b. ‘Abd al-Karīm	Muḥammad b. Sahl b. ‘Askar—Ismā’īl b. ‘Abd al-Karīm
IV:36 title	The Story of Isaiah’s Friend; the Kings of the Children of Israel and Sennacherib	Account of the King of the Children of Israel about Whom the Story of Isaiah Is Told, and of Sennacherib
IV:41:16-17	Salamān	Salamah

IV:51:32	b. al-Ḥasan—Ḥajjāj	b. al-Ḥasan—al-Ḥusayn—Ḥajjāj
IV:73:10	Nastur	Nasṭur
IV:73:12	the men of Luhrāsb	all the descendents of Luhrāsb
IV:73:15	Zarīn's son Isfandiyār lamented his father	Bishtāsb's son Isfandiyār lamented Zarīn
IV:75:17	Jawhumuz	Jawhurmuz
IV:77:15-18	Bishtāsb lived in Dihistān . . . al-Rayy.	Bishtāsb lived in Dihistān of Jurjān. Also among the seven were Qārīn al-Falhawī, who dwelled at Māh Nihāwand; Sūrīn al-Falhawī, who dwelled in Sijistān; and Isfandiyār al-Falhawī, who dwelled at al-Rayy.
IV:79:21	Sakkūn	Sakūn
IV:92:34	Salam	Salm
IV:103:11	b. David.	b. David; Joseph was Mary's paternal cousin.
IV:103:24	Mu'āwiyah	Abū Mu'āwiyah
IV:121:16	Simeon	Simon
IV:123:13	Simeon	Simon
IV:129:10	Ṣabaḥ b. Ṣabaḥ	Ṣubḥ b. Ṣubayḥ ^{327a}
IV:129	Add note: 327a. Reading Ṣubḥ b. Ṣubayḥ for the text's Ṣubḥ b. Ṣubḥ.	
IV:138:11	ʿAmr b. Tharb	ʿAmr, the son of a slavegirl, ^{349a}
IV:138	Add note: 349a. Reading <i>turnā</i> for the text's <i>tharbā</i> .	
IV:143:18	like a mother would her young ones	like a maid milking a she-camel
IV:153:21	Namīr	Namir

IV:156:9	Ibn Jumayd	Ibn Ḥumayd
IV:157:4	Ibn Jumayd	Ibn Ḥumayd
IV:165:3	al-ʿAnqarī	al-ʿAnqazī
V:3:2	Kaywajī (?)	Kayūjī
V:3:7	Dārā	Dārā, son of Dārā
V:3:8-9	and had killed two of the latter's chief commanders.	and who had been killed by two of his commanders.
V:4 n10	"Fire (and) Anāhīd," ... two deities.	either "Fire of Anāhīd" or perhaps "Fire (and) Anāhīd," a dvandva name from the names of two deities.
V:5 n12	<i>kunyah</i> or patronymic	<i>kunyah</i> or teknonym
V:9:7-8	lavishing largesse on him and giving him numerous charges.	leaving him a free hand in the running of affairs.
V:11:14	desert	plain
V:11:15-16	When we allow you ... desert	If we allow you ... plain
V:11 n41	Ardashīr's words	Ardawān's words
V:16:1	he had his son Shābūr crowned	he placed his own crown upon the head of his son Shābūr
V:16 n62	See Nöldeke, trans. 19 n. 4;	This is <i>contra</i> Nöldeke, trans. 19 n. 4. See also
V:24 n85	the only one	together with the anonymous <i>Nihāyat al-arab fī akhbār al- Furs wa-al-ʿArab</i> (see E.G. Browne, in <i>JRAS</i> (1899-1900), the only one
V:25:20	Sābūr al-Junūd	in Arabic, Sābūr al- Junūd

V:26:33	place	palace
V:27:15	he gathered together	there gathered together
V:30:4	Anatolia	the Roman empire
V:30 n93 ll. 14-16	The alternative name . . . planted there.	Cf. for this process Gowāshir in Kirmān for Wahi-Artakhshtira.
V:32 n100	mentioned here	mentioned in the sixth century
V:37:16	Dīmā	Rīmā
V:37 n117	The local <i>nabaṭī</i> name of Dīmā (in the Cairo text, the equally incomprehensible Rīmā) remains obscure.	The name Rīmā appears thus in the Cairo text.
V:38 n119	province (Fārs, for instance, having within it five <i>kūrahs</i> in Sāsānid and early Islamic times), the equivalent	province. (Fārs, for instance, seems to have had six <i>kūrahs</i> in late Sāsānid times and five in the early Islamic period; see T. Daryaee, <i>The Fall of the Sasanian Empire and the End of Late Antiquity. Continuity and Change in the Province of Persis</i> , Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1999, 57-63). This was the equivalent
V:40:4	bodily constitution	bodily constitution, manners
V:40:9	Ardashīr's astrologers had told him	the astrologers had told Ardashīr
V:40:13	perfectly formed	cultured

V:40 n122	actually brought	may have brought
V:47 n137	mainstream, Catholic, Nicene Christians?	mainstream Christians?
V:49 n143	would accordingly . . . explanation.	seems nevertheless to have a basis in fact.
V:55 n156	Shābūr I's	Shābūr's
V:56:1-2	those members of the Bakr b. Wā'il who were	some members of the Bakr b. Wā'il he settled
V:56 n156 l.1	should should	should
V:58 n162	thought Nöldeke though	though Nöldeke thought
V:59 n167	Euphrates	Tigris
V:63 n173	may	many
V:72 n191	synod of the Nestorian Church	synod of the Church
V:73:23	wheeled round behind him	turned its back to him
V:91:2	before	between
V:95:9	merry-making.	merry-making and hunting.
V:96:18-19	[re]building, and it was erected in a forward position on [the frontier of]	removal to a forward position in
V:99:7-8	deserts and wastes	plains and deserts
V:103 n261	Theodosius II	Theodosius I
V:111:8	seven	twenty-seven
V:111 n286	where there	where they
V:115:18, 19	Muzdbuwadh (?)	Mardbūdh
V:118 n303	Delete the note.	
V:119 n306	more permanent	more permanent (and later)
V:121 n308	ill-omen	ill-omened
V:122 n312 ll. 16-21	Certainly, in the third century . . . they appear in the recorded history as	Certainly, they appear in the third century as

V:128:10-11	his major-domo . . . , who was one of his cavalrymen	his host . . . , who was one of the cavalrymen (<i>al-asāwirah</i>)
V:130:12	Add note after "wagons.": 334a. <i>Marākib</i> , which could also mean "on steeds."	
V:135:1-2	A certain person . . . has	Certain persons . . . have
V:136:8	had sexual relations with	married
V:136 n348	marriage	marriage one of
V:142 n364	All this is pure fantasy.	This is perhaps fantasy, although Toufic Fahd has adduced a reference in Ibn Waḥshiyyah's <i>al-Filāḥa al-nabaṭiyyah</i> to a king of Yemen who came to Iraq ("Un incursion yémenite en Babylonie citée dans L'Agriculture nabatéenne," in <i>L'Agriculture nabatéenne</i> , III, Damascus, 1998, 329), which could be a reference to an encounter with Qubādh.

V:148:14-17	that religious faith he commanded them to observe and urged them to adopt were not to exist, the truly good way of behavior, the one which is pleasing to God, would lie in the common sharing or property.	what he commanded them to observe and urged them to adopt were not in the religion, that would itself be a good way of behavior, since the common sharing of property would bring reciprocal satisfaction.
V:149:2	Kharrakān	Khurrakān
V:153:2	buildings	a building
V:152:13	powerful	high-ranking
V:153:17-19	He also knew . . . and infantry.	He also knew that, with a force of five thousand warriors, cavalry and infantry, he could defend the frontier region of Armenia.
V:154:1	excellent	superiority in
V:155 n395	Persia empire.	Persian empire.
V:155 n395	to choose a Catholicos of their own.	to choose a bishop for Seleucia (a metropolitan of the East was established by the Monophysites at Takrit in ca. 629, and this position came to be called <i>maphrian</i>).
V:157:17	in in resources	in resources
V:159 n399 ll. 15-17	The mention of Alexandria . . . below)	The Alexandria mentioned here is the town of that name in Syria, also captured by Shābūr I.

V:165:16 V:176 n449 V:205 n511	fighting other in southwestern commandeered by the Byzantine authorities	fighting each other in the southwestern apparently commandeered, according to the <i>Martyrium</i> of Arethas, by the Abyssinian king from Byzantine, Persian and Ethiopian vessels,
V:208 n518	“Events in South Arabia	“Events in Arabia
V:214 n534	“Events in South Arabia	“Events in Arabia
V:230 n563	“Events in South Arabia	“Events in Arabia
V:231 n567 V:231 n568 V:232:5 V:235:28 V:239 n591 V:252:14 V:254:12	features other elements Bazīn patronymic Kānjār king Byzantines Upper Nahrawān,	features that other elements that Razīn teknonym Kāmkār king of the Byzantines Upper Nahrawān, that of Middle Nahrawān, planted with wheat and barley, one dirham; with vines, eight dirhams;
V:258:2	planted	Persians could control
V:259 n624 l. 20	Persian could controlled	

V:260 n626	This term is wholly obscure.	Bal'amī's translation and expansion of al-Ṭabarī, ed. Muḥammad Rawshan, Tehran, 1336/1987-88, 1176, has <i>hamdāstānī</i> , which accords with al-Ṭabarī's explanation here.
V:263:3, 6, 11	cords	bow strings
V:265:10-11	and itself becomes obliterated	and obliterate it
V:269:1	Yūsuf b. Mu'īn	Yaḥyā b. Ma'īn
V:273:35	I do not know	I do not know
V:282:22	robe	robes
V:291 n685	<i>ispabadh</i>	<i>ispahbedh</i> (sic)
V:293:19	afer	after
V:298 n701	Turkish	Turkish empire
V:301 n704	but we have no precise historical mention of this invasion.	and Jawānshīr mentions Caucasian attacks on Azerbaijan at this time; see Higgins, <i>The Persian War of the Emperor Maurice (682-602)</i> , Part I, 35-36.
V:306:23-24	It is part of our religion to choose	We are of a religion
V:313:5-6	over them. The army included in its numbers	that chooses over them who included in their numbers
V:313:10	Mūshīl	Mūsīl
V:313:14-15	Several violent clashes	A violent battle
V:313:19	Sabūr, son of Afriyān, Abādh	Sābūr, son of Andyān, Ashtād,

V:313 n733	Reading thus . . . Mamikonian family.	Nöldeke, trans. 285 n. 3, identified him as Mushel, the Armenian ruler of Mash in eastern Anatolia, from the famous Mamikonian family, but the name Mūsīl is found in the <i>Shāh- nāmāh</i> .
V:313 n735	<i>Shāh-nāmāh</i>	<i>Shāh-nāmāh</i> , ed. Moscow, ix. 117 (here the fourteen companions of Khusraw are given as: 1. Gustahm (Vitahm); 2. Gurd-Shāpūr; 3. Adiyān; 4. Bendūī; 5. Gurdūī (=Bahrām Chūbīn's brother); 6. Ādur Gushasp; 7. Shīrdhīl (cf. the name of the ancestor of the Ziyārid dynasty of Gurgān and Ṭabaristān); 8. Zangūī or Zandūī; 9. Nakhwārag (text, Tukhwārak); 10. Farrukhzād; 11. Khusraw-i Sarfāz (translating Khusraw Shmūm); 12. Ashtād; 13. Khurshīd; and 14. Ōrmazd)
V:318:9	buried, with a vegetable garden	buried in a garden and a vegetable patch

V:318:11	dug it out with his own hand	dug for the cross with his own hands and took it out
V:319 n749 l. 9	the name	been the name of
V:320:9	on a lofty throne	in a place of honour
V:320:11	throne	seat
V:322:8	Nīniwā	Nīnawā
V:322 n755	Razastēs)	Razastēs) of the Greek sources
V:323:1	ninety thousand	seventy thousand
V:323:3	such a number of troops	seventy thousand troops
V:323:21	three army commanders who	commanders of [various] armies which
V:336:13	Persian	Persians
V:326 n765	<i>kunyah</i> or patronymic	<i>kunyah</i> or teknonym
V:340 n803	This passage in parentheses	This phrase
V:365:14	summonse	summons
V:365:16	Surayd	Suwayd
V:365 n881	Surayd	Suwayd
V:366:29	unti	until
V:374:15	takng	taking
V:376 n926	implied . . . adducing the name	adduced the name Sumios in an early Christian Greek source, which might involve an hereditary honour or rank, and considered it to be unconnected with the name
V:383:10-11	back to live with those men by whom they already had	to live with men by whom they could have
V:383:23	sought refuge with you	provided refuge for you

V:384:10	He held conversation	He exchanged greetings and compliments
V:385:20	seated	lying
V:385:25	sitting	reclining
V:385 n956	cloth.	cloth, which appears in the <i>Shāh-nāmāh</i> , ix. 259 v. 84, as <i>dastār</i> .
V:386:23	of royal stock	of the people of this country
V:387:9-10	short reigned	short lived
V:388:24-26	when we had . . . had attained . . . we turned	when we have . . . have attained . . . we can turn
V:388:28	against him.	for that goal.
V:389:7	Furumīshā	Farmīshā
V:389:14	presents	presents and the letters
V:389 n959	As correctly conjectured by . . . "supreme lord."	According to . . . "supreme lord," which is supported by the fact that the <i>Nihāyat al-arab</i> gives the name F.r.mīsā twice, once as a king of India contemporary with Anūsharwān.
V:390:1	Furumīshā's	Farmīshā's
V:391:13	kingly power	the country
V:391 n962	down to us.	down to us. The fourth section of Khusraw's response is apparently absent here, but is clearly distinguished in Bal'amī, 1175.
V:393:4	kingdom	land

V:394:16	"plunder of the winds"	"wind-blown treasure"
V:394 n967	lost at sea.	lost at sea. For the exact circumstances here, see, most importantly, the <i>Anonymus Guidi</i> , 25-26.
V:398 n975	Replace the text with: <i>Pace</i> the suggested emendation <i>kharazah</i> in <i>Addenda et emendanda</i> , p. DXCVI, al-Tha'ālibī, <i>Ghurar al-siyar</i> , also has <i>hirzah</i> .	
V:402:2	for	in
V:402:18	the king's	his
V:404 n996	Heraclius	Maurice
V:405:3	[<i>Jushnas Dih</i>]	[<i>Jushnas [Ban]Dih</i>]
V:406:13	night."	night." Farrukh Hurmuz did that and mounted his horse that night to go to her.
V:407 n1006	Fīrūz.	Fīrūz. Farrukhzādh is mentioned as the son of Khusraw II in the Persian <i>Fārs nāmāh</i> of Ibn al-Balkhī, ed. G. Le Strange and R. A. Nicholson, GMS, N.S. I, London, 1921, 26, 111.
V:408 n1010	No coins of his seem to be extant	Coins of his are extant; see F. Grenet, in <i>St Ir</i> , XXIV (1995), 291-94.
V:410 n1014	434,	434, noted
V:415:18	forty-six years	forty-six hundred years

VI:1:17	Qubayṣah b. Dhu'ayb	Qabīṣah b. Dhu'ayb
VI:12:12	Umānah	Umāmah
VI:39:24	al-Mu'ammalī	al-Mu'ammalī
VI:63:26	to attend his business	to relieve himself
VI:63 n86	Delete the note.	
VI:66:29	Ẓibyān	Ẓabyān
VI:73:19	she was grieved	she uncovered her head
VI:80:28-29	Sharīk b. 'Abdallāh	Sharīk—'Abdallāh
VI:104:29	What is this son of a slave's mother saying?	What is Ibn Umm 'Abd [i.e. 'Abdallāh b. Mas'ūd] saying?
VI:111:31	they indeed strove hard to beguile you	they almost succeeded in beguiling you
VI:127:3	al-Ṣunājī	al-Ṣunābihī
VI:132:6-7	You would indeed have had a <i>qiblah</i> , had you kept to it patiently.	You had a <i>qiblah</i> had you had the patience to persist in observing it.
VI:132 n210	Delete the note.	
VI:157:20	"From the Messenger of God's emigration,	"From the Messenger of God's emigration." 'Umar said, "Rather we shall date from the Messenger of God's emigration,
VII:27:26	al-Zubayr—'Adī	al-Zubayr b. 'Adī
VII:28:8-9	He used to celebrate the night of 17 Ramaḍān	He used to spend the night of 17 Ramaḍān awake in devotions
VII:50:1	'Imāmah	'Uthāmah
VII:66:18	As'ad	Sa'd
VII:77:10	bench	portico

VII:82:23-24	Your own kin have severed the bonds of kinship.	May your kin cut you off!
VII:84 n143	55:45	54:45
VII:91:33	al-Naqī	al-Baqī
VII:91:33	Add note after al-Baqī: 153a. Reading al-Baqī for the text's al-Naqī.	
VII:99:13	al-Aswad	b. al-Aswad
VII:110 n168	3:22	3:122
VII:118:23-24	his grandfather, al-Zubayr	his grandfather—al-Zubayr
VII:165:11	Murr	Marr
IX:1 n3	Delete the note.	
IX:1 n4	Ibid.,	Ibn Ḥajar, <i>Tahdhīb</i> ,
IX:2:10	occupied Mecca	taken up quarters in Mecca
IX:12 n83	<i>Tahdhīb</i> , X, 2-3	<i>Tahdhīb</i> , XI, 2-3
IX:21:18	Nakhlāt	Nakhlāh
IX:47:4	[May 19—October 14, 631]	[March—October, 630]
IX:84:10	Dhū	Dhī
IX:107:24	ʿAbdallāh	ʿUbayd
IX:107 n734	Replace the text with: A client of the Banū Zurayq, who died in 105/723-24. Ibn Ḥajar, <i>Tahdhīb</i> , VII, 63-64.	
IX:120:13	Salamah	Salimah
IX:126:1	Sharīq	Shaqīq
IX:157:10	Mujammaʿ	Mujammiʿ
IX:164 n1138	Delete the note.	
IX:208:12-13	and explained to him its rites.	; he (i.e. Abū Bakr) explained to them (i.e. the pilgrims) its rites.
IX:208:18-19	he received the revelation	was made a prophet

X:153:25	Ṣuhār	Ṣuhār
XI:110:3	al-Qaryatayn	al-Qaryatān
XI:144:9 [bis]	Nadbah	Nudbah
XI:198:7-8	of the [same] side of the river as the Muslims	of the Euphrates with the Muslims at al- Miltāt
XII:5:1	like on body	like one body
XII:15:10	moore deeply	more deeply
XII:27:4, 7	Āzādbih	Āzādhbih
XII:44:15	is it, them, that remains	is it, then, that remains
XII:48:6, 9	lamb	calf
XII:60:25	Ṭayzanābād	Ṭīzanābādh
XII:60 n233	Ṭayzanābād	Ṭīzanābādh
XII:124:31	Abu Mikhrāq	Ibn Mikhrāq
XII:137:10	vineyard	vineyard
XII:163:11-12	Shuwaysh Abū al- Ruqqād	Shuways Abū al- Ruqād
XII:185:9, 10	Mikhā'īl	Mīkhā'īl
XII:190:34-35	Where are going	Where are you going
XIII:23:14	They said:	They all said— Muḥammad, al- Muhallab, Ṭalḥah, 'Amr, Abū 'Umar, and Sa'īd:
XIII:66:15-16	al-Ruqqād	al-Ruqād
XIII:95:22	Yaḥyā	Abū Yaḥyā
XIII:163:3	Alexandria	Miṣr and Alexandria
XIII:165:34	Qāsim	Ibn Abī Qāsim ^{556a}
XIII:165	Add note: 556a. That is, al-Qāsim (son of the father of al-Qāsim).	

XIII:173:29	dressed in Egyptian colors standing by al-'Abbās.	brought on various Egyptian dishes al-'Abbās (may God be pleased with him).
XIII:195:30		
XIV:13:11	the sons of 'Amr	the sons of 'Umar
XIV:13 n66	These are perhaps the sons of 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ.	Both the Leiden and Cairo editions read "sons of 'Amr," but these are in fact the sons of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.
XIV:31:16	al-'Ansī	al-'Absī
XIV:49 n241	Replace the text with:	Qur'ān, XXVIII:5.
XIV:120:10	al-Shafā	al-Shifā
XV:4:20	two-bladed dagger	double-hilted dagger
XV:39:2	four <i>rak'ahs</i>)	four (<i>rak'ahs</i>)
XV:48:4	Muqsim	Miqsam
XV:60:22	Tīzanābādh	Tīzanābādh
XV:62:18	Yūnis	Yūnus
XV:99:32	al-Buqay'	al-Baqī'
XV:127:8	Saīd	Sa'd
XV:144:25	Jābir	Jabr
XV:159:20	Insert after al-Tujībī, ²⁸⁴ :	'Urwah b. Shuyaym al-Laythī, Abū 'Amr b. Budayl b. Warqā' al-Khuṣā'ī, Sawād b. Rūmān al-Aṣḥabī, Zur'ah b. Yushkar al-Yāfi'ī,
XV:171:19-20	with Salāmah b. Rawḥ al-Judhāmī and his two sons Muḥammad and 'Abdallāh,	with his two sons Muḥammad and 'Abdallāh and with Salāmah b. Rawḥ al-Judhāmī,
XV:172 n311	Replace the text with:	One of the stations of the Egyptian pilgrimage route.

XV:218:27	Nā'ilah and her daughters	Nā'ilah and his daughters
XV:220:6	Shīyam	Shuyaym
XV:253:31	Add the following text after "in the grave.": Hishām b. Muḥammad said that he was called by the <i>kunyah</i> Abū 'Amr.	
XVI:22:20	Yanbū'	Yanbu'
XVI:32:26	Salimah	Salamah
XVI:96:23	Sa'r	Si'r
XVI:141:4	al-Nadr	al-Naḍr
XVII:159:1	al-Raḥmān	al-'Azīz
XVII:169:26	al-A'wal	al-A'war
XVIII:3 n7	This "Thursday shurṭah" was an elite force or bodyguard	Shurṭat al-khamīs means the same thing, <i>khamīs</i> being a south Arabian word for "army." The unit described here was an elite force or bodyguard
XVIII:3:18-19 XVIII:5:6-8	al-Majāzī al-Khuzā'ī ¹¹ (According to) Ziyād b. 'Abdallāh—'Awānah gave an account similar to that of al-Masrūqī—'Uthmān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān. He added to it:	al-Majāzī ¹¹ al-Khuzā'ī According to Ziyād b. 'Abdallāh—'Awānah (who mentioned an account similar to that of al-Masrūqī, from 'Uthmān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān, but added to it):
XVIII:5:20-21	a leader of error	a leader of error (<i>imām ḍalālāh</i>)
XVIII:8:28	If I knew	I do not know

XVIII:9:10	<i>Al-Ḥasan's Surrender of al-Kūfah to Mu'āwiyah</i>	In this year occurred the truce between Mu'āwiyah and Qays b. Sa'd, after Qays refused to render allegiance to Mu'āwiyah.
		<i>Account of the Truce between Mu'āwiyah and Qays b. Sa'd</i>
XVIII:12:17 XVIII:12:21f.	your own misfortunes we will have protected you from your enemy	your own evil conduct we will have dealt with your enemy for you
XVIII:13:1-2	you will have been protected from us	you will have been spared dealing with us
XVIII:15:4 XVIII:15:4-6	if necessary. The people assembled for that, while their leaders were eagerly anticipating Abū Bakrah.	at that time. The people assembled for that with their anxious eyes looking forward to the arrival of Abū Bakrah.
XVIII:16:21	Your brother has wealth	Your brother owes wealth
XVIII:16:22-23	He doesn't have anything	He doesn't owe anything
XVIII:17:23-24	You will certainly not prefer anything over the satisfaction of God	You shall not prefer anything over what is pleasing to God
XVIII:19:12-13	You may violate that guarantee of protection, (since) you weren't asked for it	This is a guarantee of protection for which you will not be held responsible if you violate it
XVIII:22:4	about ten men	between ten and twenty men

XVIII:22:6-7	O Brothers of the Muslims	O Brother Muslims
XVIII:22:11-12	when it was time for the dawn worship	when (the <i>muezzin</i>) gave the second announcement for dawn worship
XVIII:22:15	folk	(fighting) men
XVIII:22:25-30	Nights and days and years and months will not continue indefinitely for a son of Adam until he tastes death and will part from the virtuous brothers and leave the world over which only weaklings weep, a world which is always harmful for whoever has concern and worry	Nights and days, years and months soon make (every) son of Adam taste death and part from the Righteous Brethren, leaving the present world, over which only weaklings weep, and which always harms whoever fixes his concern and worry on it
XVIII:23:6	let us turn	we will turn
XVIII:23:8	we would have	we shall have
XVIII:23:16	My friend	My two friends
XVIII:23:18-19	with numerous squadrons. You will call upon God and in Him you will prevail	among numerous squadrons that summon unto God and that prevail for His sake
XVIII:23:20	My mule has left	When my mule leaves
XVIII:23:22-23	But I am leaving soon, even if my supporters are few	But even if my supporters are few, I am leaving soon,
	so I would not shame you two, with whom he goes	together with those who go; I will not shame the two of you
XVIII:25:5	I am satisfied with everyone	I am satisfied with you and with everyone

XVIII:25:12	For they are not all virtuous enough for that command	You are not all suitable for leadership
XVIII:25:23	a group	the group
XVIII:25:35	folk	(fighting) men
XVIII:26:19	refused at	held out in
XVIII:28 n117	This probably means attempting to resist him	That is, who stretched out his hand toward the caliphate
XVIII:30:16-17	If you are not going to deceive me, I need these letters	If you haven't deceived me, these letters are my business
XVIII:33:12-13	Hishām—Ja'far b. Hudhayfah al-Ṭā'ī— al-Muḥill b. Khalīfah	Hishām—Abū Mikhnaf—Ja'far b. Ḥudhayfah al-Ṭā'ī—al- Muḥill b. Khalīfah
XVIII:31:11	You will not be concealed	Do not conceal yourself
XVIII:34:2	sought to defend themselves with	rushed for
XVIII:35:17-18	Stay as you are	Stay where you are
XVIII:35:19	Enter, rightly guided	Enter, you're quite right to do so
XVIII:36:11	while he rode his horse	when he had just mounted his horse
XVIII:36:30	Salamah	Salimah
XVIII:37:17	Arab district	Arab clan
XVIII:37:20	desiring proof and excuses	intending refutation and self-justification
XVIII:38:19	People of the House ¹⁶⁰ by his folk.	people of family among his folk.
XVIII:38 n160	Delete the note.	
XVIII:39:23	no Arab alive	no Arab tribe
XVIII:39:25	some of them are among the living	some of them are somewhere among the tribe

XVIII:39:26	If I should find that out, truly I would win favor	If that has been related to me correctly, I will win favor
XVIII:41:14	Will you remain out of ignorance in the house of those who err,	You stayed in the abode of sinners out of ignorance,
XVIII:41:15-16	For the enemies assaulted the folk and they set you up for slaughter by a mistaken opinion	Assault the hostile people who, by an erroneous doctrine, have set you up to be slaughtered
XVIII:41:21	powerful, short-legged	strong of flank
XVIII:41:23	for I am given first the cup of fate to drink	that he might make me drink the cup of fate first
XVIII:41:24-25	It is hard for me that you are afraid and driven out. When I draw out [my sword] unsheathed among the violators	It is hard for me that you are afraid and driven out, While I have not yet drawn my sword against the violators (<i>muḥillīn</i>)
XVIII:42:1-2	When every glorious [person] scatters their group, when you would say he had turned away and fled, he would come back	And while men, each of them glorious, have not yet scattered their group, men such that when you say [of one of them] he has turned and retreated, he advanced
XVIII:43:4-5	You should only send against them one of the notables of the city whom you see around you, whom you find	Any notable (<i>sharīf</i>) of the city you see around you that you send against them you will find

XVIII:43:31-33	As for you, I have heard that you censure 'Uthmān to one of the people, and I have also heard that you openly proclaim something of 'Alī's superiority. But you do not mention	Take care lest I hear that you censure 'Uthmān to one of the people, and take care lest I hear that you openly proclaim something of 'Alī's superiority. But you have not mentioned
XVIII:44:16-17	Yes indeed, by God! I favor orators [who are] firm leaders	Yes, by God! I am indeed the orator, the firm, the leader
XVIII:44:19-20	where the lances clashed splitting the shafts lengthwise and making the heads fall off	where the lances clashed, so that cranial sutures are split lengthwise and the top of the head is cut off
XVIII:44:27	Abū al-Naḍr b. Ṣāliḥ	al-Naḍr b. Ṣāliḥ
XVIII:45:1	We shall summon them and excuse them	We will summon them and do that which will excuse us
XVIII:45:13-14	Don't give up on them. They are forbidden to stay for more than an hour in any territory where you summon them	Anywhere you catch up with them, don't allow them to remain there longer than it takes you to invite them [to submit]
XVIII:45:23-24	Let none of his companions do differently	Let none of his companions delay
XVIII:45:28	Ḥabīb	Jundab
XVIII:46:23-24	and will reject you for your disgraceful act.	and will throw back at you [our agreement] and fairly so.
XVIII:47:16	they weren't looking at me	they continued to look at me

XVIII:47:20-21	don't tangle with me or else God will absolve me of guilt concerning you	you shall not reach me until I render myself excused before God in regard to you
XVIII:47:31	I watched my sword	I sheathed my sword
XVIII:48:2-4	Al-Mustawrid would not be my choice for Caliph because of what I have seen of his hypocrisy and baseness in drawing his sword against the Muslims	In my opinion, al- Mustawrid, because of what I have seen of his humility and modesty, is not one who is likely to rebel against the Muslims with his sword
XVIII:52:2	Draw us aside	Let us stand aside
XVIII:52:3-4	He then had us draw aside	So we stood aside
XVIII:52:15	trained horses	caparisoned horses
XVIII:52:26	If we don't leave the battle, we won't be routed	As long as we have not left the battle, we have not been routed
XVIII:52:29	we do not turn back	we have not turned back
XVIII:52:29-31	lest it be said, "Abū Ḥumrān b. Bujayr al- Hamdānī was routed." I would only care if it is said,	I won't mind if people say, "Abū Ḥumrān b. Bujayr al-Hamdānī was routed," but they will say,
XVIII:52:34	When they return against you	If they turn back from you
XVIII:53:19-20	How do you think they are doing?	How did you see them doing?
XVIII:53:20	We think the Ḥarūriyyah are	We saw the Ḥarūriyyah
XVIII:53:21	Do you think my men	Did you see my men
XVIII:54:1-2	This cavalry is covered with dust	That is the dust of the [approaching] cavalry

XVIII:56:4-5	and was killed. I only know that he killed one person whom he had seized by the neck. 'Umayr fell upon the man's chest	and he killed—I only know that he killed one person who, I learned, had seized him by the neck, so 'Umayr fell upon the man's chest
XVIII:56:25-26	I don't think they will camp where you are until tonight or early tomorrow morning	I think they will camp by you tonight or come against you tomorrow morning
XVIII:57:23-24	Then it disappeared after a while. I fear that they are abandoning	Now, for some time, I have not seen their shape. I fear they may have abandoned
XVIII:58:11-13	if they come to you, let the others know, and fight them. Don't abandon your position under any circumstances until	if they come to you and begin fighting some other [contingent], never abandon your position until
XVIII:58:33-34	God spare us their inconvenience! We are going	If God spares us their inconvenience, we are going
XVIII:58:34-35	It is for the Kūfans to defend	The Kūfans have men to defend
XVIII:59:2	brother	tribesman
XVIII:60:19	He also camped there at sunrise	He attacked them at sunrise
XVIII:60:24	being mingled together	being evenly matched
XVIII:60:32	Indeed the youth, every youth, who	Indeed the complete hero is the man who
XVIII:60:35-36	She knew that I, when the injury alighted, would frighten, on the day of the battle, a bold hero	She has learned that when trouble comes, I am the most terrifying man on the day of strife, bold, courageous

XVIII:61:21	Ḥabīb	Jundab
XVIII:61:25	noble	best
XVIII:62:21-22	thereby distracting us from our cutting of the bridge.	and so they were too preoccupied to stop us cutting the bridge.
XVIII:63:29	Ḥabīb	Jundab
XVIII:64:20	discouraged	eluded
XVIII:65:2	Qubbayn	Qubbīn
XVIII:65 n241	Qubbayn	Qubbīn
XVIII:65:4	After a while	Right away
XVIII:66:8	Abū Ashā'	Abī Ashā'ah
XVIII:66:19	noble	best
XVIII:66:24-25	To the rescue! Rescue lies in searching.	Hurry! Hurry in pursuit!
XVIII:66:32	So far they have been ahead of you	Now they are in front of you. You've caught up with them! How close to them you are!
XVIII:67:3	Why are you coming?	What happened to you?
XVIII:67:3-5	We don't know. We were certainly surprised. The folk were with us among our army while we were separated from each other.	Before we knew it the enemy was with us in our camp and we were scattered.
XVIII:67:8	I certainly saw him killed	We think he must have been killed
XVIII:68:15	this dog of whose soul God has despaired	this dog whom God has made to despair of his soul
XVIII:70:4	charage	charge

XVIII:70:7-11	Indeed, a leader of worship (<i>imām</i>) must either deliver the sermon, finding no escape from it, or he stupidly pours [it] out from his head heedless of what goes forth from him.	No one undertakes to deliver the sermon except an <i>imām</i> , who has no choice, or a fool who prattles with no regard to what comes out of his mouth.
XVIII:71:2-3	‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Walīd	‘Abd al-Raḥmān (b. Khālīd) b. al-Walīd
XVIII:74:20	more noble than they	the most noble of them
XVIII:77:24-25	between the backs of the Qays	among the Qays
XVIII:78:12	free	truncated
XVIII:78:15	His virtues	His graciousness
XVIII:78:16	the utmost	more of
XVIII:79:7-8	abandonment of	allowing
XVIII:79:10	seducers	offenders
XVIII:79:16-17	You are not wise, while you follow the foolish and what you regard as shielding them continues	You are not wise; you have followed the foolish, and, as you see, you have continued to shield them,
XVIII:80:26	Perhaps someone	Many a person
XVIII:80:27	someone	many a person
XVIII:81:12	whence	whither
XVIII:83:21-22	they both went in front of him with two spears, competing (with each other).	they quarreled in his presence with two spears.
XVIII:84:1	Who will tell Ziyād about me?	Who will tell Ziyād from me?
XVIII:84:9	helping	helped (by God)
XVIII:84:10	oppress	stray
XVIII:84:23	not inexperienced among the young	not inexperienced with events

XVIII:85:10	was with Ziyād	was married to Ziyād
XVIII:88:1-2	Mālik b. ‘Ubaydallāh	Mālik b. ‘Abdallāh ^{298a}
XVIII:88	Add note: 298a. Reading ‘Abdallāh for the text’s ‘Ubaydallāh.	‘Abdallāh for the
XVIII:91:13	march past him	paid him a visit
XVIII:95:7	Salimah	Salamah
XVIII:96:7	Muḥammad b. Mūsā	Muḥammad b. Abī Mūsā
XVIII:99:28-29	who had collected the Qur’ān	who knew the (entire) Qur’ān by heart
XVIII:100:28-29	God did not bring Qarīb close	Qarīb, may God not bring him close!
XVIII:101:6-7	for the [entire] year	for this year
XVIII:101:33	was concerned about	was about to [move]
XVIII:102:25-26	Mu‘āwiyah b. Ḥudayj was dismissed from Egypt and Ifrīqiyyah.	Mu‘āwiyah b. Ḥudayj was dismissed from Egypt and Maslamah b. Mukhallad was appointed over Egypt and Ifrīqiyyah.
XVIII:102:29	is (city of)	its (city of)
XVIII:103:1-2	When God, Almighty and Great, summoned them	So he prayed to God, Almighty and Great, against them, and
XVIII:103:3	as the beasts of prey carried off their cubs.	even the lions did so, carrying off their cubs.
XVIII:103:4-6	‘Uqbah b. Nāfi‘ announced, “Indeed when we settled they departed, blaming us, and went out fleeing from their dens”	‘Uqbah b. Nāfi‘ proclaimed, “We are going to settle; depart ye from our bands,” so they went out fleeing from their dens.
XVIII:103:7	I was told by al-Mufaḍḍil b. Faḍālah—	I was told by (Mūsā b. ‘Alī’s father)—al-Mufaḍḍal b. Faḍālah—
XVIII:104:22-23	How often you check it,	How tightly you secure them [i.e. the coins],

XVIII:105:2	To the rescue!	So hurry!
XVIII:106:15	the Jāhiliyyah	a time of ignorance
XVIII:106:18-20	And if it was during [the time of] faith [something] like this would be hateful to you.	And if it had happened under a religion other than that [i.e. ignorance], you would have given us our due,
	We have our rightful possession,	
XVIII:107:1	You were hurled at something	You desired something
XVIII:107:7	and more forbidding than they towards neighbors	and the one of them who best protects the neighbor
XVIII:108:17	b. Naṣr b. 'Ilāṭ b. Khālīd al-Sulamī.	b. Naṣr b. Khālīd al- Bahzī, one of the Banū Sulaym, and al-Ḥajjāj b. 'Ilāṭ b. Khālīd al- Sulamī.
XVIII:112:7-9	I had not tasted food before that. When I said I came for their (wedding feast), I got some food.	I had not eaten yet, so I said, "I'll go to them and get some food."
XVIII:112:10	someone leading a horse	the leading part of a horse
XVIII:115:6	Ziyād summons me	Ziyād summoned me
XVIII:115:9	if he wants their stipend,	if he wants to bestow a stipend on them,
XVIII:117:25-26	All at once I was with Ibn Qitrah	Behold, I saw Ibn Qitrah
XVIII:117:28	split the space between	went between
XVIII:118:7	Who would inform Ziyād about me?	Who will tell Ziyād from me?
XVIII:118:13	So, if you like, you were related	If you wish, you may be related ^{417a}

XVIII:118	Add note: 417a Cairo has “I may be related” instead of “you may be related,” which makes better sense in the context, since al-Farazdak has just described his flight and the Christians, Jews, Fuqaym, and the monkeys may be taken as symbols of cowardice.	
XVIII:118:15	And you and I were related to the Jews	And he belonged to my family, and I was related to the Jews ^{417b}
XVIII:118:15	Add note: 417b Cairo puts this after the following verse, where it makes better sense.	
XVIII:118:16	And, if you like, you were related	And, if you wish, you may be related
XVIII:118:17	and you would be related to me	and he belonged to my family
XVIII:118:17-18	and I would be related to the monkeys	and I belonged to the monkey family
XVIII:118:23	while a flood of agony	while the flood of rippled sand
XVIII:120:10-12	You are consoled by steadfastness and your good fortune. You don't see an outstanding refuge other than the former nights,	Console yourself with patience. No, by your fortune, you will not see the summit of the refuge until the last of the passing nights,
XVIII:121:2	gave him	would make for him
XVIII:123:24-25	blaming 'Alī for what had happened and for killing 'Uthmān.	criticizing 'Alī, attacking him, and blaming [him] for the death of 'Uthmān.
XVIII:124:8	He united our speech	He united us
XVIII:124:11-12	He would also call for 'Uthmān's murderers [to be punished].	He also prayed against 'Uthmān's murderers.
XVIII:124:15	burn for	are passionate about

XVIII:124 n427	Add: Without vowels the word in the text could be read as either <i>thuluthay</i> (two-thirds) or <i>thalāthī</i> (thirty)	
XVIII:124:24	they increased	they said a lot of
XVIII:124:35-36	He will come to a governor after me, and will regard him like me	There will come a governor after me, and [Ḥujr] will suppose him to be like me
XVIII:125:3-4	I do not want to start the people of this city killing the best among themselves	I do not want to start something with the people of this city by killing the best of them
XVIII:126:15-16	I shall have accomplished nothing	I am nothing
XVIII:127:12-13	I will not be addressed by you or consider speaking to you.	I will neither pardon you nor ask for your pardon.
XVIII:128:9	while you console with the other?	while you heal with the other?
XVIII:129:19	[679]	[690]
XVIII:129:19-20	I was accompanied by an Aḥmarī.	I suddenly noticed an Aḥmarī walking beside me.
XVIII:129:30-31	that it was a righteous matter	that he was a righteous man
XVIII:130:11	God is between	God is [the judge] between
XVIII:130:12	God, Almighty and Great, is between	God, Almighty and Great, is [the judge] between
XVIII:130:15	Ḥudhām	Judhām
XVIII:130:18	saying extemporaneously	saying in <i>rajaz</i> verse
XVIII:130:31-33	They are all bastards except you. By God, I certainly think that you have killed yourself	Ride! Woe is you, by God, I think that you have killed yourself

XVIII:131 n438	Cairo reads: "You considered."	Cairo reads: "You considered, O Ibn Barṣā' al-Ḥitār, fighting him [to be the same as] your fighting Zayd."
XVIII:131 n439	Lit: "circle of the rump."	Lit: "son of a woman with a leprous anus."
XVIII:131:6	I blame the sons of baseness, except for you, openly	O baseness, son of baseness! What has brought you unarmored
XVIII:131:9	when there is dismay	when there is war
XVIII:131:9	the day you both met	the day they both met
XVIII:131:12	the best offspring of sires	the best offspring of sires?
XVIII:131:19	Qahdān	Fahdān
XVIII:131:21	on behalf of your brother for a while, so fight	and fight for a while on behalf of your brother
XVIII:132:28-29	it was only when, and certainly not until, we learned	before anyone could say "no," someone came and told us
XVIII:132:30	Banū Jabalah, that the people	Banū Jabalah. So the people
XVIII:133:24-25	You are no bastard.	Woe is you!
XVIII:134:2	Banū Dhul	Banū Dhuhl
XVIII:134:37	"Indeed, he will not do it, so release him."	"Indeed, he will not do it." So he released him.
XVIII:135:31-32	at the place of worship	struck against al-Muslī
XVIII:135:31-32	blows at the place of worship	blow of al-Muslī
XVIII:136:15-16	A many-colored dog harms its own family	Barāqish harms his own family

XVIII:136 n446	Such a dog by barking at others, gives its masters away, so they perish and the dog with them.	Barāqish was the name of a dog that gave its masters away by barking at others. So they perished and the dog with them.
XVIII:137:4, 14, 15, 17	Rifā'at	Rifā'ah
XVIII:137:20	'Amr	Rifā'ah
XVIII:137:24- 25	and if you fight him would harm you	and if you kill him, it will be harmful for you
XVIII:137:35	Ishāq	Abū Ishāq
XVIII:138:11- 12	I will never be released from him unless he kills me.	He will kill me before I can ever escape.
XVIII:138:26- 27	Ziyād asked, "What will make you recognize him?"	Ziyād exclaimed, "How much you know about him!"
XVIII:140:11- 12, 15	the mountains	the two mountains (See note 474)
XVIII:140:31	There four	These four
XVIII:140:34	that matters would only be set right by the family of Abū Ṭālib	that rule (i.e. the caliphate) was fitting only among the family of Abū Ṭālib
XVIII:141:10	stubborn	unbroken
XVIII:141:27	allegiance	allegiance
XVIII:142:33	(the witnesses included) Labīd . . .	(the witnesses included) 'Amr b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Zubaydī, Labīd . . .
XVIII:142:37	Miḥṣan b. Tha'labah from among the allies of Quraysh	Muḥaffiz b. Tha'labah from 'Ā'idhat Quraysh
XVIII:144:18	the Gharīyūn	al-Ghariyyān ^{459a}
XVIII:144	Add note: 459a. These were two structures like monk's cells or silos on the outskirts of al-Kūfah. See Yāqūt, <i>Buldān</i> , III, 790-95.	

XVIII:144:12	al-Naṣr	al-Naḍr
XVIII:145:15	one	anyone
XVIII:146:10-11	I only saw this after he had removed himself from your testimony.	I think he has taken himself out of your testimony.
XVIII:146:15	against him	against them
XVIII:146:16, 17	I thought	I think
XVIII:147:1	allegiance	allegiance
XVIII:147:26	while he blames me	so why do you blame me?
XVIII:148:8-9	the Caliph." That was to their advantage with the Commander of the Faithful.	the Caliph. Let this be to their credit with the Commander of the Faithful.
XVIII:148:9	asked about them	asked for them
XVIII:148:13	You have asked me about your cousins	You have asked me for your two cousins
XVIII:148:23-24	he would corrupt my city for me. Tomorrow we must send	he would corrupt my city for me and force me tomorrow to send
XVIII:148:34	Fiyyād	Fayyād
XVIII:148:36	they brought the prisoners	they came to [the prisoners]
XVIII:148:37	Add note after al-A'war: 463a. Hudbah b. Fayyād was called al-A'war, which means "the one-eyed man." Al-Khath'amī evidently took this as an omen for half of them being killed and half saved.	
XVIII:149:25	Abū Sharīfah	Abū Sharīf
XVIII:150:4	Fiyād	Fayyād
XVIII:150:7	your companions.	your master (i.e. 'Alī)
XVIII:150:24-25	Shall I renounce the faith of 'Alī who used to worship God along with it?	Do you renounce the faith by which 'Alī used to worship God?
XVIII:152:10	Warqā' Sumayyah	Warqā' b. Sumayy

XVIII:152:6-9	The Commander of the Faithful is prevented from allowing you to intercede with him about your cousin except [out of] sympathy for you and your friends, lest they resume another war for you.	Only concern for you and your companions prevents the Commander of the Faithful from accepting your intercession for your cousin, lest they cause another war for you.
XVIII:153:13	and was in good spirits	and was reconciled
XVIII:154:5	Zā'idah	Abī Zā'idah
XVIII:155:13	Add note after "If he should perish": 472a. Cairo, Ibn al-Athīr and Aghānī have "If you perish."	
XVIII:156:9	Dhūl	Dhuhl
XVIII:156:27-28	your spearheads and your tongue? 'Abdallāh b. Khalīfah!	[the man who is] your spear and your spokesman, 'Abdallāh b. Khalīfah?
XVIII:156:36	I brought you my cousin whom you killed.	Should I bring you my cousin so that you can kill him?
XVIII:157 n474	Jabal Ṭā'ī	Jabal Ṭayyī'
XVIII:157:16	youth	youthful passion
XVIII:157:8-9	When 'Adī was informed . . .	When 'Adī was brought and informed . . .
XVIII:157:17	childhood	youth
XVIII:157:19	hardship	desires of youthful passion
XVIII:157:20	in it	for it
XVIII:157:22	while they do not find a source except the spring of death	they did not find an exit from the pond of death

XVIII:157:23-24	<p>Their fates summoned them and he whose day approached of the people, so know that it would not be postponed.</p>	<p>Their fate summoned them, and when a man's day comes, it cannot be postponed.</p>
XVIII:157:26	<p>the day when I face⁴⁷⁶ one whose burning is memorable.</p>	<p>whatever day I face⁴⁷⁶ the memorable burning heat (i.e. of battle).</p>
XVIII:158:2	<p>unless</p>	<p>until</p>
XVIII:158:5	<p>And Ḥujr receive in them</p>	<p>There Ḥujr received</p>
XVIII:158:9	<p>who will bleed the throats of the horses</p>	<p>who will help [me] against cavalry whose necks are bloodied</p>
XVIII:158:10	<p>and of the aggressive king</p>	<p>and the aggressive king</p>
XVIII:158:20-21	<p>so receive the good news!</p>	<p>so rejoice!</p>
XVIII:158:22	<p>Kindifī</p>	<p>Khindifī</p>
XVIII:158:23	<p>to be told good news</p>	<p>to rejoice</p>
XVIII:158:25	<p>you met</p>	<p>you were caused to meet</p>
XVIII:159:16	<p>was active</p>	<p>is active</p>
XVIII:161:21f	<p>have</p>	<p>had</p>
XVIII:163:12	<p>about me?</p>	<p>from me?</p>
XVIII:163:14	<p>nourish</p>	<p>appoint</p>
XVIII:164:1	<p>Nīzak</p>	<p>Nayzak</p>
XVIII:167:34	<p>improvement</p>	<p>postponement</p>
XVIII:168:26-27	<p>O Miskīn, God makes your eye weep, however</p>	<p>O Miskīn, may God give you something [real] to cry about, for</p>
	<p>its tears flowed in error, so they descended.</p>	<p>your tears have been flowing and descending by mistake.</p>
XVIII:169:1	<p>I say to him</p>	<p>I say about him</p>
XVIII:168:29	<p>place</p>	<p>time</p>

XVIII:169:20-21	and the front feathers of her wing continued to be ascribed to her,	and her wings continued to carry her,
XVIII:170:12-13	after he had been buried.	while he was being buried.
XVIII:170:22-23	offering a prayer." They responded, "Amen."	offering a prayer, so say "Amen."
XVIII:171:8	brought his wealth as <i>zakāt</i> . ⁵⁰¹	brought the <i>zakāt</i> ⁵⁰¹ of his wealth.
XVIII:171:9-10	Another man came and beheaded him,	Another man came and [Samurah] beheaded him,
XVIII:172:13, 15	step	ladder
XVIII:173:36f.	By God, if we were not sons of a single uncle, God would not have united us with him out of support for the wronged Caliph. ⁵⁰⁴ There was truth for us in the congruence of our speech so that we would pay attention to that and in which we obtained good.	By God, if we were not descendants of a single ancestor, because of God's having united us in support for the wronged Caliph, ⁵⁰⁴ and our being on the same side, it would have been incumbent on us to be mindful of that, but that which [God] brought us was better. ^{504a}
XVIII:174:4	Add note after: "was better.": 504a. That is, the kinship between Sa'īd and Marwān, which was God's work, took precedence over the political alignment between Sa'īd and Mu'āwiyah.	
XVIII:174:10-11	When Marwān (started to) carry out the deed	When Marwān sent the workmen

XVIII:174:23-24	Add note after "I did not demolish your house, yet I am not ensured against you.": 504b. Cairo reads: "I would neither destroy your house nor seek to make you beholden to me."	
XVIII:176:2-3	and was not astonished at him,	and what pleased him,
XVIII:176:10	has been skillful	has become skillful
XVIII:176:28	Seize the sword	Withhold the sword
XVIII:176:30-31	It preserves [you] from lowering your own reputation.	Guard your honor from being besmirched.
XVIII:176:32	and don't announce something	and don't give an order
XVIII:176:35	let those who are with you be more numerous	be the bravest of your own forces
XVIII:177:15	Continue to rebuke me, my critic,	Spare me your rebuke, O critic,
XVIII:177:22	We were given poison to drink a while before today,	We were given instantaneous poison to drink before today,
XVIII:178 n512	Add to the end of the note: Cairo reads: "and half of Baykand."	
XVIII:181:2	ʿAlī	ʿAbdallāh
XVIII:181:36-37	and he put ʿUbaydallāh Aslam b. Zurʿah in charge of Khurāsān	and ʿUbaydallāh (in turn) put Aslam b. Zurʿah in charge of Khurāsān
XVIII:181:8	carried out	been excessive in
XVIII:182:8	Thābit—Iṣḥāq	Thābit—someone—Iṣḥāq
XVIII:184:29-30	Indeed people have devised for them two qualities	Two traits harm people

XVIII:185:6-8	Go slowly in this matter, for it would be more appropriate in order to accomplish what you want.	If you go slowly, what you want will probably come to pass.
XVIII:185:10	There is an alternative.	Isn't there an alternative?
XVIII:186:13, 27	I would be	I will be
XVIII:186:24	. You lead them	whom you lead
XVIII:187:3-4	It has been possible for the people to do this	The people have agreed to this
XVIII:187:33- 34	the utmost point which he was not able to attain nor seek to surpass?	an extent which is not to be contested or overstepped?
XVIII:188 n524	Add at the beginning of the note: "I want the Ghūṭah" could also mean "I would not want the Ghūṭah"	
XVIII:188:14	He censured me to you,	He was angry with you because of me,
XVIII:189:7-8	and they fought each other all day until nightfall, then they disengaged without further fighting.	and they stood facing each other all day until nightfall, then they disengaged without fighting.
XVIII:189:16- 17	If it was not for the Banū Ḥarb, your blood would be sprinkled inside broken and one-eyed vermin.	If it was not for the Banū Ḥarb, your blood would have been made to sprinkle the bellies of vermin, [those of you being] broken and one-eyed.

XVIII:193:12-16	Among us there are those whose term has been decided, those who still wait and those [who are] righteous victors by their superiority. Whoever among us still waits will be one of our predecessors, the ones deciding their term, performing good deeds first.	Some of us have died; some of us yet await [death]. The former are the righteous who have won victory by their merit; those of us who still await [death] are affiliated with our forbears, who have died and gone before [us] in well-doing.
XVIII:194:4-5	—that is the frontier of al-Rayy.	(by “frontier” he meant al-Rayy).
XVIII:196:15	Speak harshly!	Well!
XVIII:196:32-33	some wager	a horse race
XVIII:197:10	his wager	his horse race
XVIII:198:2-3	You would not be rewarded for your kindness if you were punished because of me.	Due to your kindness you don’t deserve to be punished because of me.
XVIII:198:17	fight them	kill them
XVIII:198:22-23	account which Khallād b. Yazīd al-Bāhili recited to me.	account. Khallād b. Yazīd al-Bāhili recited it to me.
XVIII:198:21	So why don’t you make me	Of what will you make me
XVIII:200:21	Muslim	Maslamah
XVIII:201:16	If I should converse,	If I spoke,
XVIII:202:10	we would feed it	so we could feed them
XVIII:202:19	So testify	I testify
XVIII:202:25	penetration	letter
XVIII:204:19	O ‘Adas!	‘Adas
XVIII:205:6, 25	penetration	letter
XVIII:205:10	So testify	I testify

XVIII:205:28-29	imitated him as a means of ridiculing	used him as a front in order to ridicule
XVIII:206:1	You [and] Ziyād	You are certainly an increase (<i>ziyādah</i>)
XVIII:206:8	So testify	I testify
XVIII:208:2	Sawriyah	Sūriyah
XVIII:209:28	thousands	thousand
XVIII:212:14	He had discharges.	He had discharges [from his lungs].
XVIII:212:23	This is said to be from the collection of a reliable person.	It is also said: "as the collector who is reliable" (instead of "as the runner who is fatigued").
XVIII:212:27-28	clothed me with a shirt. One day I held it up while he pared his nails. I then took	clothed me with a shirt, so I kept it. One day he pared his nails, so I took
XVIII:213:12	Then he went blind, but afterwards recovered his sight	He lost consciousness, then regained it
XVIII:214:4-6	We are wrapping him in them and putting him in his grave, and leaving him	We are going to wrap him in them and put him in his grave and leave him
XVIII:214:14	The Caliph has certainly felt pain.	The Caliph has become bedridden and in pain.
XVIII:214:16	as if it raised dust from its severed foundations.	as if it had been cut from its foundations.
XVIII:215:11	a girl, Rabb al-Masāriq	(a girl named) Amat Rabb al-Masāriq
XVIII:216:12	One of his mawālī	A <i>mawlā</i>
XVIII:218:38	Bakr	Bakrah
XVIII:219:1	Bakr	Bakrah

XVIII:219:22-23	If you were in charge of anything regarding the people, I would entrust you with this,	If you are in charge of any public business, treat him well,
XVIII:219:30	before you, and you are ahead of him.	before you to have you be ahead of him.
XVIII:221:4	Add note after "His pots still exist": 583a. "His pots" is a reference to hospitality.	
XVIII:221:7-8	I shall never felicitate her in your presence.	I shall never mention her to you again.
XVIII:221:19-20	Add note after "The announcer only summoned me just now": 583b. The call to worship made at that hour was only meant for him.	
XVIII:222:3-4	Sulaymān—'Abdallāh b. Mas'adah ⁵⁸⁴ b. Ḥakamah al-Fazārī	Sulaymān—Abdallāh b. Mubārak—Jarīr b. Ḥāzim—Muḥammad b. al-Zubayr—'Abdallāh b. Mas'adah b. Ḥakamah al-Fazārī
XVIII:222 n584	Delete the note.	
XVIII:222:13-14	he caused losses to this world and it caused losses for him.	he obtained [something of] this world and it obtained [something of] him.
XVIII:223:2-4	You revile 'Alī who is Zayd's grandfather, while Zayd, the son of al-Farūq, ⁵⁸⁶ heads the notables. Haven't you considered that he endures that?	You revile 'Alī who is Zayd's grandfather, while [Zayd is] the son of al-Farūq, ⁵⁸⁶ publicly. Did you think he would endure that?
XVIII:223:21	Aymān	Ayman
XVIII:223:22	biceps	arms
XVIII:223:24	When the men beget their children, ⁵⁸⁸	When men's children beget, ⁵⁸⁸
XVIII:223:33	flirting with women	composing amatory verses about women

XVIII:224:1-2	someone ignoble. Praise is the bait of the shameless, but be proud	someone ignoble, and beware of panegyric poetry, for it is the bait of shamelessness. But be proud
XVIII:224:4	Abū al-Ḥasan b. Ḥammād	al-Ḥasan b. Ḥammād
XVIII:224:21- 27	granted to mankind. If someone is reminded ... he should carry it out.	granted to mankind." And if he was reminded, he remembered; if he was granted [something], he was thankful; if he was tested, he was steadfast; if he was angry, he suppressed it; if he had power [over someone], he forgave; if he did wrong, he asked forgiveness; and if he made a promise, he carried it out.
XVIII:224:28	‘Alī b. ‘Abdallāh	‘Alī—‘Abdallāh
XVIII:224:28	Hishām b. Sa‘īd	Hishām b. Sa‘d
XVIII:225:24- 25	Sulaymān b. ‘Uyaynah	Sulaymān—‘Abdallāh— Sufyān b. ‘Uyaynah
XVIII:226:1-3	If al-Mughīrah were put in al-Madīnah, he would not exit from any of its doors ⁵⁹¹ unless he did so by treachery. ⁵⁹²	If al-Mughīrah were put in a city from all of whose gates there was exit only with difficulty, he would get out. ⁵⁹¹
XVIII:226	Delete note 591; renumber note 592 to 591.	
XIX:26:30	Māriyyah	Māriyah
XIX:27:10	Māriyyah	Māriyah

XIX:100:19	Badn	Badr
XIX:103:4-5	Shaffayyah	Shufayyah
XIX:103 n356	Shaffayyah	Shufayyah
XIX:108:14	Sudda'	Ṣudā'
XIX:184:10	'Ubaydah	'Abīdah
XIX:184 n593	'Ubaydah	'Abīdah
XX:46:27	al-Qaflānī	al-Qāflānī
XX:127:20-21	al-Sirrī	al-Sarī
XX:134:15	al-Sirrī	al-Sarī
XX:183:16	Sīḥān	Sayḥān
XX:220:25	al-Ḍabbābī	al-Ḍibābī
XX:222:34	al-Ribāb	al-Rabāb
XXI:24:10, 21	al-Ḍabābī	al-Ḍibābī
XXI:24:23	keft	left
XXI:30:11	fought with 'Abd al-Raḥmān	quarreled about 'Abd al-Raḥmān (trying to take credit for killing him)
XXI:46:14	Here I am standing, and you did not come out to me.	Here I am standing, why did you not come out to me?
XXI:54:13	that	what
XXI:57:26	skilled	killed
XXI:87:7	induce al-Mukhtār's companions to abandon him	and to abandon al-Mukhtār's companions
XXI:123 n437	to Azāriqah	the Azāriqah
XXI:129:2	Sabī	al-Sabī
XXI:129 n462	Sabī	al-Sabī
XXI:152:1	'Awn	Abī 'Awn
XXI:176:25	sent	send
XXI:184:7, 18, 20	al-Nābī'	al-Nābī
XXI:192:19	hinding	hiding

XXI:210:6	Mukammil	Mukammal
XXI:211:11	God curse your father!	God curse you!
XXI:214:17	Ṭalḥah al-Ṭalḥāt	Ṭalḥat al-Ṭalaḥāt
XXII:38:35	Sinjar	Sinjār
XXII:163:9	al-Ṣabāḥ	al-Ṣabbāḥ
XXII:172:12	al-Sulayk	al-Sulayl
XXIII:84: 7	I see the influence of Nāfi' b. 'Alqamah.	I see a spot here for Nāfi' b. 'Alqamah.
XXIII:84 n321	Replace the text with: Nāfi' b. 'Alqamah b. Ṣafwān, governor of Mecca; see Khalīfah, <i>Ta'rīkh</i> , ed. 'Umarī, 293.	
XXIV:9:20	Habbanaqat	Habbanaqah
XXIV:32:10	stipends	allocations in kind
XXIV:50:24	stipends	allocations in kind
XXIV:43:10	slave soldiers	slaves of the camp
XXIV:43:19	the good influence they had on	their approval of
XXIV:57:21-22	They surrendered, submitting to Yazīd's rule	They surrendered, at Yazīd's discretion (i.e., unconditionally)
XXIV:76:9	when they ignored his summons	After exhorting them at great length
XXIV:79:17	household	family
XXIV:81:1, 3	have I no kinsmen?	have I no fellow tribesmen?
XXIV:81:2	sinners, disquitters, and thieves are	the impudent and infamous sinner is
XXIV:82:21	fathers	forefathers
XXIV:83:17	a partisan of the Arabs	a (tribal) partisan

XXIV:83:18-20	I come to you out of solicitude. Today, I am a partisan of the Arabs and, by God, one man from my tribe is dearer to me than a hundred men who are not.	I came to you with solicitude (for all), but now I am a partisan (of my tribe), a changed man; by God, one man from my tribe is dearer to me than a hundred men who are not.
XXIV:84:16-18	By God, I am a partisan of the Arabs who travels during Ramaḍān in order to promote the cause of the Arabs.	By God, I am a partisan (of my tribe), a changed man.
XXIV:84:28-29	punishment	retaliation
XXIV:85:5	kinsmen	fellow tribesman
XXIV:86:26	Nuhayk	Nahīk
XXIV:93:20	household	family
XXIV:96:24	to cut off the arm of the thief	to cut off (the hand of the thief)
XXIV:101:29	Marthid	Marthad
XXIV:102:3, 4, 5, 9	Marthid	Marthad
XXIV:122:24	whose sacred precincts are inviolable	whose people and property are inviolable
XXIV:122:25	ʿUmrān	ʿImrān
XXIV:131:12	pillage	set foot in
XXIV:131:33	This man's household has obedience and heroic deeds.	This man comes from a family known for its obedience and heroic deeds.

XXIV:132:24- 28	They say to you, "We accept you," and they claim not to want to exercise their authority except in accordance with your orders and instructions. But, in fact, they seek to drive you away from them so that they might engage in treachery.	They don't tell you, "We accept your conditions," with the intention of only exercising their authority in accordance with your orders and instructions; rather, they (say it) with the intention of appeasing you until they can engage in treachery.
XXIV:155:12	those who had accumulated pious deeds and were steadfast	those who lay up rewards for themselves by being steadfast
XXIV:155:20- 22	You are responsible for the horses, so make their backs sore, for animals with sore backs will charge them more furiously than you will.	Go for the (enemy's) horses and cut their hamstrings, for when they are hamstrung they will inflict more damage on them than you will.
XXIV:160:16	God's martyrs	the men of high rank who have been slain
XXIV:172:10	Therefore, al-Ḥarashī ordered the soldiers to pack up and leave.	He ordered the soldiers to set out (anyway).
XXIV:173:2-3	The land has no one to defend it. Yet when your army failed to join you, you gave the order to pack up and leave.	The land is hostile, with no friendly forces, and your army has not joined you, yet you give the order to set out!
XXIV:186:28- 29	asked for permission to take vengeance on	lodged a complaint against
XXIV:194:10	Māwiyah	Māwiyyah

XXV:12:21

‘Ubād

‘Ibād

XXV:15:3

al-Subūḥ

al-Ṣabūḥ

XXV:76:7

Who is this heady wine
pouring?Who is the one
straining forward (at
the front of the army)?

XXV:104:14-15

offering

receiving

XXV:107:6

Qarrān

Qurrān

XXV:136:17

green hoods

horsetail standards

XXV:145:22

their spoils

their herds

XXV:146:5

(their faces) dyed red

dressed in red

XXV:146:15

round tents

horsetail standards

XXV:146:21

tents

horsetail standards

XXV:146:37f.

he took victory as his
spoilhe took advantage of
the victory

XXV:151:2

round tents

horsetail standards

XXV:182:4

I arranged for a
physician for HishāmI prepared some
aromatics for Hishām

XXV:182:5

that physician

those aromatics

XXV:188:11

al-Riqāshī

al-Raqāshī

XXVI:9:21-22

I do not have any
patience with this

This is intolerable

XXVI:10:22

Add note after “his mother”: 46a. Fāṭimah,
Zayd’s paternal aunt, was ‘Abdallāh’s mother.

XXVI:10:25

she was the best
woman of our kinsfolkshe was the best
stranger (*dakhīlah*)
who has entered
among our kinsfolk

XXVI:11:27-28

I have no patience with
thiswe are not prepared to
endure this

XXVI:12:18-22	God does not make it a prerequisite that He should be pleased with someone in order to elevate him nor does He make His displeasure a reason for bringing him low	God has not elevated anyone to such a degree as to be too lofty to be satisfied with him (i.e., with an oath in His name), nor has he lowered anyone to such a degree that this (i.e., an oath) would not be accepted from him
XXVI:12:23-24	you will not obtain it	you do not deserve (to obtain the caliphate)
XXVI:13:10-11	this is certainly not what is expected of you	do not act in this way
XXVI:14:3-6	Even if one of our tribes like Madhḥij or Hamdān or Tamīm or Bakr joined them, there would still be enough men for you to deal with them	Even if (only) one of our tribes, such as Madhḥij, Hamdān, Tamīm or Bakr, rose up against them, (this tribe) would suffice for you to deal with them
XXVI:16:27-28	whenever he lived in any other town and summoned his followers they responded	Whenever he lives in any town other than his own, and summons its inhabitants to his cause, they respond
XXVI:18:1	and impatient when you meet them	but unsteady when they face a foe
XXVI:18:22-24	until, thanks to the fragmented state of the community, they have brought them to a situation in which they have incited them to rebel	until they have brought them to a situation of communal discord in which they have incited them to rebel

XXVI:19:17-18	So I am leaving the leaders of the Kūfans to you. Threaten them	So summon the tribal leaders of al-Kūfah and threaten them
XXVI:19:23-24	and those who are in league with Satan and who have been enslaved by him	but all these try to subject Satan (to their aims) while he (actually) subjects them (to his)
XXVI:20:4-14	Indeed . . . religion.	Indeed, the Commander of the Faithful is absolved from blame as regards Zayd, and he has fulfilled his obligations towards him. Zayd has no way to claim that he has been denied a right which belongs to him, either of his personal share or of a stipend or of an allowance to which he is entitled as kin of the Prophet, except—as the Commander of the Faithful fears—what would incite the rabble to undertake something that would probably make them more wretched and misguided, and be more bitter for them, while strengthening the Commander of the Faithful and making it easier for him to protect and preserve true religion.

XXVI:20:22-26	Know . . . houses.	Know that, if they doggedly disobey, there is a means by which you can prove to them that you are worthy of God's help; this is by meeting their demands in full, giving their children the stipends to which they are entitled, and forbidding your army to attack their women and their homes.
XXVI:20:28	injustice	rebellion
XXVI:21:4-5	May God . . . Do not	I beseech you, O Zayd, in God's name, join your family and do not accept
XXVI:22:17	sons-in-law	brothers-in-law
XXVI:27:7	Qurran	Qurrān
XXVI:27:14	Bedouin	Arab
XXVI:33:3-4	did you not know that even the lord of a citadel ¹⁶⁹ is not proof against all perils?" ¹⁷⁰	do you not know that the one under siege cannot escape certain facts?" ¹⁷⁰
XXVI:33 n169	Delete the note.	
XXVI:33:17	letter	document
XXVI:37:19-20	seeking . . . family	seeking to avenge the blood of this family (of yours)
XXVI:37:20	disputed	usurped
XXVI:21-22	My strongest argument against you is	The most I will say in response to what you have mentioned is
XXVI:39:15-16	al-Tin'ī, ²⁰⁷ who was later called al-Ḥaḍramī	al-Tin'ī ²⁰⁷ al-Ḥaḍramī

XXVI:40:14-15	al-Hamdānī, ²¹⁷ who was later called al-Khaywānī	al-Hamdānī, ²¹⁷ al-Khaywānī
XXVI:42:5-6	What made you break your promise?	How treacherous you are!
XXVI:45:13-14	Who is supposed to be the head of the cavalry around here?	What an incompetent head of the cavalry you are!
XXVI:50:17	was a stutterer	spoke with an accent
XXVI:51:26	Yes, but	Yes indeed, and
XXVI:61:17-18	of what Naṣr has suffered at my hand and you know how [badly] I have behaved towards him.	that Naṣr has been kind to me, whereas I behaved (badly) towards him, as you know.
XXVI:61:27	difficult times he has been through	his favors
XXVI:61:28	family	people
XXVI:62:25-26	accepted his intercessions in respect of what he needed	acted as his intercessor when he needed something
XXVI:63:1	‘Ukabah	‘Ukābah
XXVI:63:15-16	had left [al-Kūfah]	had risen in rebellion
XXVI:64:16-17	If he is to you as treason and faithlessness are to the character of an honorable man, And	If he is one of you (of honorable descent), then treason and faithlessness are not the qualities of an honorable man, But
XXVI:76:7	God will not forgive me for my errors if I forgive Ghaylān his.	May God not forgive my error if I forgive Ghaylān his!
XXVI:74:9	dīwān guards	assistants to the secretaries
XXVI:82:10	Qaḥdam	Qaḥdham
XXVI:89:21-22	for Islam or not	a Muslim or not

XXVI:95:3-4	has ruined my friends, my women, and my family	erased [the names of] my friends, my women, and my family [from the <i>ḍīwān</i>]
XXVI:96:28-30	made much of . . . curtailed.	inscribed your friends in the <i>ḍīwān</i> and gave them lavish allowances even though they do not undergo the hardships that the Muslims suffer every year when they are mobilized for campaigns.
XXVI:97:26- 98:2	that it is not . . . and that	that he possesses no power for better or worse over what God in His kindness has given him. Rather, God is the owner of that over him, and has more power (than anyone else) to make decisions regarding his sons and his subjects. He gives precedence to whom he wishes and holds
XXVI:105:25- 27	will appoint as his successor someone from among his sons and subjects, giving precedence to whom he wishes and holding	commanding it by which He prevents (people) from committing sins, curbs them so that they do not perform acts which He forbids, and protects
XXVI:107:15 XXVI:109:16- 18	commanding by it by which He repulses those who rebel against Him, safeguarding those things that are sacred to Him and protecting	

XXVI:115:16	No one makes requests outside its remit.	From Him alone can it be petitioned.
XXVI:117:1	al-Mismā'ī	al-Misma'ī
XXVI:120:9, 11	free-born	free
XXVI:123:1-2	What a surprising remark from someone who	I am astonished at this man who
XXVI:123:4-5	By God . . . in fetters.	"By God . . . in fetters."
XXVI:124:4-5	striking down	obtaining as booty
XXVI:128:6	Suḥayb	Ṣuḥayb
XXVI:128:22- 23	When I went in . . . himself	When I came back to Yūsuf, he greeted me: "Well, how did you find the libertine?" meaning by that al- Walīd
XXVI:128:24- 25	hear you saying such a thing	hear about this (slur) from you
XXVI:128:25	I would divorce	May I divorce
XXVI:128:26- 27	rather than allow my ear to hear such things as long as you live	if my ear has ever heard it—so long as you are alive
XXVI:128:27	Then al-Walīd laughed.	Yūsuf laughed.
XXVI:132 n653	Delete the note.	
XXVI:134:12	and the 'Abs, ⁶⁶⁹	with the 'Abs, ⁶⁶⁹ (on your side)
XXVI:140:5	state	dynasty
XXVI:142:13- 14	Mind the carpet . . . I do have	Do sit down on the carpet, may God make you prosper." Yazīd replied: "But I have
XXVI:146:4	'Uthrah	'Udhrah
XXVI:146 n747	'Uthrah	'Udhrah

XXVI:146:13-15	Honor them as the bulwarks of a tradition (<i>sunnah</i>), ⁷⁵³ for it was they who protected their honor against every unbeliever.	How honorable are these tribes, who firmly supported the tradition (<i>sunnah</i>), ⁷⁵³ It was they who protected its sacred precepts against every unbeliever.
XXVI:158:15	al-Mu'āfirī	al-Ma'āfirī
XXVI:159:20-21	seeing that I have an exclusive status with my people	and grant me an exclusive status with you from among my people
XXVI:160:7	that he will come out on your authority.	I shall surrender myself to you unconditionally.
XXVI:164 n857	Delete the note.	
XXVI:164:5-6	Abū Ma'shar—Aḥmad b. Thābit—his informant(s)—Iṣḥāq b. ʿĪsā	Aḥmad b. Thābit—his informant—Iṣḥāq b. ʿĪsā— Abū Ma'shar
XXVI:164:11-12	Abū Ma'shar—Aḥmad b. Thābit—his informant(s)—Iṣḥāq b. ʿĪsā	Aḥmad b. Thābit—his informant—Iṣḥāq b. ʿĪsā— Abū Ma'shar
XXVI:167:13-14	O Ibn al-Sabbā'	O son of the wine merchant
XXVI:171 n889	Replace the text with: The initiator of the 'Abbāsīd revolution.	
XXVI:172:23	Dinnah	Ḍinnah
XXVI:172:23	Dinnī	Ḍinnī
XXVI:172:23	'Uthrah	'Udhrah
XXVI:173:22	His messenger.	His messenger.'
XXVI:173:25	(himself) goes astray."	(himself) goes astray."
XXVI:176 n916	Delete the note.	

XXVI:176:19-20	He ⁹¹⁶ spoke to Abān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Numayrī about Khālīd and said:	Abān b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Numayrī spoke about the matter of Khālīd, then Yūsuf said:
XXVI:184:7	long continued to lament and mourn for al-Walīd	installed the mourners and the lamenting women (to weep for) al-Walīd
XXVI:184:18	who were in the <i>junds</i> wrote to the effect that they would not give the oath of obedience to Yazīd	pledged themselves in writing to avoid giving the oath of allegiance to Yazīd
XXVI:187:15-16	O Abū Sa'īd, I swear to you by God that the <i>amīr</i> (of Ḥims) is sending his <i>jund</i> forward to fight (us) at this very moment.	I beseech you by God, Abū Sa'īd, do not let our commander send the army to battle under these conditions.
XXVI:188:22-24	and thus he restrained them, for his heart misgave him at what Sulaymān and 'Abd al-'Azīz had done. Hostilities	and the troops held back. Sulaymān and 'Abd al-'Azīz were upset with what he had done, and hostilities
XXVI:188:25-27	The Dhakwāniyyah were stopped from attacking the Banū 'Āmir on being assured that the latter would	But they did hold back from the Ḥimsīs, on the condition that they
XXVI:190:4	Zinbā'	Zinbā'
XXVI:194 n986	Delete the note.	
XXVI:194:8	river	canal

XXVI:194:18	those of you who pay the poll-tax (burdens) which will drive you from your lands and decimate your progeny	your <i>jizyah</i> -payers burdens which will drive them from their lands and decimate their progeny
XXVI:197:20- 21	there is no one there like Maṣṣūr in	he is inadequate, because of
XXVI:203:29	Rashīd	Rāshid
XXVI:204:1	Rashīd	Rāshid
XXVI:206:13- 14	by the action they would be taking	by remaining as they were
XXVI:209:20	over	from
XXVI:210:7	a poet	he
XXVI:210:10	against	on behalf of
XXVI:210:11- 13	My hand is surety for you against the Bakr of Iraq, against their leader and the son of the most distinguished one among them.	I (give) you my hand as a pledge for the Bakr of Iraq, Their leaders, and the descendants of al-Waṣṣāf ^{1038a} .
XXVI:210	Add note: 1038a. Al-Waṣṣāf is the nickname of al-Ḥārith b. Mālīk, one of the leaders of the Banū 'Ijl in pre Islamic times; the 'Ijl were part of the Bakr. See Muhammad b. al-Ḥasan b. Durayd, <i>Kitāb al-Ishtiqāq</i> , Göttingen 1854, pp. 207-208.	
XXVI:213:28	only from	between

XXVI:213:32 Add note after Abū Ghassān: 1057a. Abū Ghassān was a Baṣran leader who was in his prime in the latter part of the seventh century. His name was Mālik b. Mismā', from the tribe of Qays b. Tha'labah (Rabī'ah). It is reported that when one of the governors of Baṣrah refused to pay the people their stipends, Abū Ghassān ordered him to clear out of town. The present verse was composed, among others, about this incident. When 'Abdallāh b. al-Zubayr, the ruler at the time and the father of that governor, heard about this, he dismissed his son from office. See *Naqā'id Jarīr wa-l-Farazdaq*, Leiden 1908-1912, 2, p. 1090.

XXVI:215 Delete the note.
n1066

XXVI:215:3-4 For that reason there came forward someone
XXVI:215:5-10 Those who (now) seek . . . willed.

This was undertaken by someone
Those who are accountable for the caliph's¹⁰⁶⁵ blood (literally "those who should be sought after because of the caliph's blood") are the holders of authority from amongst the Umayyads, for his blood shall not go unavenged. If the discord is stilled through them and things are put right, then that is a decision desired by God against which there is no appeal.

XXVI:216:14-15	bloodwit and had asked	bloodwit, and
XXVI:217:4	Then	‘Amr said: “When
XXVI:217:4-11	‘Amr	Marwān [three times]
XXVI:217:11	away.	away.”
XXVI:223:29	disowned	aborted
XXVI:225 n118	Substitute the text of the note with: Reading with the Cairo edition, but the text is certainly defective.	
XXVI:225:13-15	at [Asad b. ‘Abd] . . . Khurāsān	with God because He preferred Muḍar over Rabī‘ah (when choosing His Prophet). He was in Khurāsān (?)
XXVI:227:5-7	ruined my friends and has ostracized me and my dependents	erased [the names of] my friends, my women, and my family [from the <i>dīwān</i>]
XXVI:227:23	al-Naḥawī	al-Naḥwī
XXVI:228:24, 33	al-Naḥawī	al-Naḥwī
XXVI:250:17	along	leading
XXVI:251:28-30	who were . . . behind them.	having been busy fighting, were taken by surprise by the (enemy’s) cavalry and swords, and their shouting “God is the greatest” (<i>takbīr</i>) as they penetrated their lines from behind.
XXVI:254:22	When we meet the people I will retreat with them	When we meet in battle, I shall make (my own people) retreat
XXVI:254:27	assembled	engaged in battle
XXVI:256:5	Nakh‘	Nakha‘
XXVI:260:13	with	among
XXVI:263:15	attack	stay in

XXVI:264:4	‘Aṭiyah	‘Aṭiyah
XXVI:265:22	fair treatment	appointment as governors
XXVI:265:25-26	deals with . . . asked him	complies with my demand to act according to the book of God and to appoint good, meritorious people, as I have asked him
XXVII:1:4-5	‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Ibrāhīm reported the following from Abū Hashīm Mukhallad b. Muḥammad, al-Ḍubba‘ī	According to Aḥmad— ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Ibrāhīm—Abū Hāshim Mukhallad b. Muḥammad, al-Ḍuba‘ī
XXVII:23:32	Salamah	Salimah
XXVII:31:9	‘Iyād	‘Iyād
XXVII:80:7	Rabī‘ah b. ‘Abd al- Raḥmān	Rabī‘ah b. Abī ‘Abd al- Raḥmān
XXVII:129:24	Shurayḥ	Surayj
XXVII:129:28	al-Kaṭṭāb	al-Khaṭṭāb
XXVII:129:30	al-Hamadhanī	al-Hamdānī
XXVII:136:19	‘Aṣamm	‘Uṣm
XXVII:136:23	Shihāb	Ibn Shihāb
XXVII:137:7	Shihāb	Ibn Shihāb
XXVII:142:1	Salamah	Salimah
XXVII:148:8	Mu‘āwiyah	Mu‘āwiyah
XXVII:170:25	al-Khuth‘amī	al-Khath‘amī
XXVII:171:34	Ba‘albakk	Ba‘labakk
XXVII:175:18	al-Juhnī	al-Juhanī
XXVII:187:7	Man b. Zā‘idah	Ma‘n b. Zā‘idah
XXVII:187:9	Fazzārah	Fazārah
XXVII:192:28	Fazzār	Fazārah
XXVII:202:35	Najāh	Najāh

XXVII:208:17	Add after "governed Mosul": Yazīd b. Asīd governed Armenia.	
XXVIII:126:2	asked Abū Ja'far. "She was still wed to	asked Abū Ja'far—she was still wed to
XXVIII:126:3	b. al-Ḥasan even though you swore	b. al-Ḥasan—"when you swore
XXVIII:182:23	Saybah	Shaybah
XXVIII:279:1	Amah	Amat
XXIX:13:9	al-Sariyy	al-Sarī
XXIX:120 n382	p. 000	p. 255
XXIX:134:21	Shabbah	Shaybah
XXIX:134 n450	Delete the note.	
XXIX:201:14-15	Muḥammad b. 'Ubaydallāh	Muḥammad b. Abī 'Ubaydallāh
XXX:20:11	headdress	cloak
XXX:42:34-35	Then after that, be comfortable to the female role which is incumbent upon you."	Thereafter you are welcome to the deference and respect owed a person of your rank where it is due to you."
XXX:65:14	Mūsā	Muḥammad
XXX:69:13	cried out.	cried out. He came to Mūsā and showed him his hand.
XXX:172:7	Nasā'	Nasā
XXX:176:6	Nasā'	Nasā
XXX:178:2	Nasā'	Nasā
XXX:262:10	Shurāḥīl	Sharāḥīl
XXX:295:19-20	Ṭabaristān	Ṭarāristān

XXXI:212:17	Shanīf	Shunayf
XXXII:3:10-11	213 (833)	218 (833) [bis]
XXXII:39, 41, 43, 45 (in running headers)	201	200
XXXII:44:32	Delete marginal page number 1001.	
XXXII:45:9	Add marginal page number 1001.	
XXXII:49:22	Delete marginal page number 1004.	
XXXII:50:5	Add marginal page number 1004.	
XXXII:51 n163	same	name
XXXII:66:13	Minjab	Minjāb
XXXII:67:28	Rādhānayn	Rādhānān
XXXII:71 n228	Wednesday	Monday
XXXII:75:6	Şiyādah	Şayyādah
XXXII:75 n243	Replace the text with: For this place see M. Streck, <i>Die alte Landschaft Babylonien nach den arabischen Geographen</i> , Leiden, 1900-01, II, 289.	
XXXII:101:21-22	take care not to do it again!"	take care not to come back!"
XXXII:110:20	Nasr	Naşr
XXXII:110:26	his	His
XXXII:132:17	Abū Sa'd	Abū Sa'dah
XXXII:135:8	three	two
XXXII:135:10	one million	two million
XXXII:135 n407	755ff.	785ff.
XXXII:153:22	Then when he had straightened it	Then when he came up to him
XXXII:155:12	3.25	32.5
XXXII:207 n643	XLII, 2/3	XLIII, 3
XXXII:210:33	read it out	gave it to him to read
XXXII:242:22-23	may he give all his possessions away for pious purposes, if he has	may I give all my possessions away for pious purposes, if I have
XXXII:255:13	Jasham	Jusham

XXXIII:194:5	‘Alī	Abī
XXXIV:96:23	al-Ṣāmighān	al-Ṣāmaghān
XXXIV:197:3	Ḥamīd	Ḥumayd
XXXV:2:13	243	248
XXXV:5:13	Qūṣarah. ¹⁸	Qawṣarah ¹⁸ in the streets of Sāmarrā.
XXXV:6:3	over the Sawād. ²⁰	over the entire Sawād by himself. ²⁰
XXXV:9:6	Malatīyah	Malatyah
XXXV:10:30	Muḥammarah	Muḥammirah
XXXV:16:1	Ṭālīb	Ṭāhir
XXXV:21:14	granted	granted by al-Musta‘īn
XXXV:27:23	Ḥamad	Ḥamd
XXXV:39:22	al-Sharābānī	al-Shāriyānī
XXXV:42:11	Ḥamad	Ḥamd
XXXV:42:24	Rādān	Rādhān
XXXV:44:1	Rashīd	Rāshid
XXXV:46:8	Rashīd	Rāshid
XXXV:47:5	al-Muṭallibīn	Malatyah troops
XXXV:58:31	Ṭabaristān	Ṭarāristān
XXXV:59:4	Ṭabaristān	Ṭarāristān
XXXV:61:5	Nawākī ¹¹⁹ arrow	nāwakī ¹¹⁹ arrow
XXXV:76:17	Malatīyah	Malatyah
XXXV:77:29	Malatīyah	Malatyah
XXXV:81:1	Malatīyah	Malatyah
XXXV:83:27	al-Ḥusayn	al-Ḥasan
XXXV:109:6	mace	maize
XXXV:122:7, 12, 17	Sharīḥ	Shurayḥ
XXXV:148:4	Tell	Tall
XXXV:150:28	Malatīyah	Malatyah
XXXV:153:8	Tell	Tall
XXXV:160:13	He and ‘Alī’s followers	We and ‘Alī’s followers

XXXVI:56:16	‘Umrān	‘Imrān
XXXVI:67:14	Nahr Abū Qurrah	Nahr Abī Qurrah
XXXVI:132:11	al-Ṭafāwah	al-Ṭufāwah
XXXVI:142:13	Wah	Wāh
XXXVI:142 n404	bah/nah	bāh/nāh
XXXVI:170:21	al-Mubaraqa‘	al-Mubarqa‘
XXXVI:179:10	Jārūrah Banī Marwān	Jārūrat Banī Marwān
XXXVI:182:27	al-Ṭalāqānī	al-Ṭālaqānī
XXXVII:1:3-4	invested him	and Abū Aḥmad (al-Muwaffaq) invested him
XXXVII:1:12	his clients	his wealth
XXXVII:6:20	the customs	al-Jār
XXXVII:8:25	al-Bīlam	al-Baylam
XXXVII:8 n25	Replace the text after “178.” with: For al-Baylam, see Schwarz, <i>Iran im Mittelalter nach den arabischen Geographen</i> , Leipzig, 1896-1936, IV, 343.	
XXXVII:9:4	Azarmard	Azārmard
XXXVII:13:12	barges (<i>shadhdh</i>)	barges (<i>shadhā</i>)
XXXVII:78:28	al-Yashkarī	al-Yashkurī
XXXVII:34:4	Jabīb	Ḥabīb
XXXVII:39:21-22	on a Saturday, in the middle of Rajab, 267 (February 5—March 6, 881)	on Saturday, the fifteenth of Rajab, 267 (February 19, 881, a Sunday)
XXXVII:42:11-12	on a Saturday, in the middle of Rajab, 267 (February 5—March 6, 881)	on Saturday, the fifteenth of Rajab, 267 (February 19, 881, a Sunday)
XXXVII:43:4	Nawukiyyah	nāwakiyyah
XXXVII:46:39	Yaghla‘uz	Baghlāghaz

XXXVII:47:5-6	on a Sunday, in the middle of Sha'bān, 267 (March 7—April 4, 881)	on Sunday, the fifteenth of Sha'bān, 267 (March 21, 881, a Tuesday)
XXXVII:47:17-18	Ya'lā b. Juhistār	'Alī b. Jahshiyār
XXXVII:59:38	Nawukiyyah	nāwakiyyah
XXXVII:60:9	Nawukiyyah	nāwakiyyah
XXXVII:60:25	Nāwukiyyah	nāwakiyyah
XXXVII:63:24-25	took place after the skirmish which occurred on Sunday	took place, after the skirmish which occurred on Wednesday
XXXVII:66:38	Juwway	Juwayy
XXXVII:70:32	Shibāb	Shihāb
XXXVII:78:11-12	Ibn Mālik the Zanjid	the son of the king of the Zanj
XXXVII:79:13	Ibn Ṣaqlabiyyah	Ibn al-Ṣaqlabiyyah
XXXVII:81:4-5	implored the authorities for protection	lodged a complaint with the authorities
XXXVII:82:20	Qartās	Qirtās
XXXVII:87:30	Qartās	Qirtās
XXXVII:87:31-32	on Monday, the twenty-fifth of Jumādā II, 269 (January 9, 883)	on Monday, the twenty-fifth of Jumādā I, 269 (December 10, 882)
XXXVII:88:31-33	to hunt. On Jumādā II . . . , Sa'īd b. Makhlad left Abū Aḥmad, and went to Sāmarrā	to hunt, where he was joined by Sa'īd b. Makhlad, who had left Abū Aḥmad. Sa'īd then went to Sāmarrā
XXXVII:88:34	Jayghawayh	Jābghawayh
XXXVII:102:34	Nāwukiyyah	nāwakiyyah
XXXVII:106:37	Juwway	Juwayy
XXXVII:12:9	seized all	seized most of
XXXVII:123:23-24	(Tuesday night, May, 12, 883)	(June 12, 883)

XXXVII:137:7	Qartās	Qirtās
XXXVII:139:32	August 6, 870	September 7, 869
XXXVII:143:21	The meter is also tawīl.	It is also lengthy.
XXXVII:144:25	a spear	the (Prophet's) spear
XXXVII:146:14	O Muslims, I lament over its devastation!	Its devastation made the Muslims cry.
XXXVII:149:12- 13	a heretic established his rule over the road to Khurāsān	a Khārijite rebelled in the area of the Khurāsān Road
XXXVII:155:7	Şiddīq	Şadīq
XXXVII:156:2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 11	Şiddīq	Şadīq
XXXVII:157:3	al-'Abdī	Fāris al-'Abdī
XXXVII:157:10	anchor	stern
XXXVII:157:24- 25	thus putting an end to al-Ṭāṭī's career.	His property was put under seal.
XXXVII:157:29	domains belonging to the notables	private estates of the caliphal family
XXXVII:164 n164	Delete the note.	
XXXVII:164:8	al-Naşrāniyyah	al-Naşriyyūn
XXXVII:168:16	Wednesday, the nineteenth of Şafar, 278 (June 2, 891)	Wednesday, the twenty-first of Şafar, 278 (June 4, 891, a Friday)
XXXVII:169:13	Abū Aḥmad	Aḥmad
XXXVII:169:23- 24	a revolutionary group	the uprising of a group
XXXVII:171:4	who drove oxen	who transported things on his oxen
XXXVII:171:14- 15	—they thought he took it for the Imām.	, claiming that he was taking it for the Imām
XXXVII:173:8-9	, that he	. But they (the authorities)

XXXVII:176:7-8	On the twenty-eighth of al-Muḥarram, 279 (Sunday, April 30, 892)	On the twenty-second of al-Muḥarram, 279 (April 24, 892)
XXXVII:177:4-5	On the twenty fourth of Jumādā I, 279 (Tuesday, August 22, 892)	On the twenty-second of Jumādā I, 279 (August 24, 892)
XXXVII:177:4-5	On the twenty-fourth of Jumādā I, 279 (Tuesday, August 22, 892)	On the twenty-second of Jumādā I, 279 (August 20, 892)
XXXVII:178:1	On Monday, the nineteenth of Rajab (October 14, 892)	On the eve of Monday, the nineteenth of Rajab (October 15, 892, a Sunday)
XXXVIII:2:13	Tuesday	Monday
XXXVIII:21:29	in the camp of al-Mu'taḍid	in the camp of al-Mu'taḍid and pleaded for his protection. Ishāq took him to the tent of al-Mu'taḍid
XXXVIII:29:6	Ḥamdān.	Ḥamdān and he bestowed robes of honor on a number of his principal men.
XXXIX:6:18	ʿUkkāẓ	ʿUkkāẓ
XXXIX:6 n22	ʿUkkāẓ	ʿUkkāẓ
XXXIX:16:15	Kharrabūdha	Kharrabūdha
XXXIX:104:13	al-Raqqād	al-Ruqqād
XXXIX:135:21	Salām	Sālim
XXXIX:169:14	Ṣafiyy	Ṣafī
XXXIX:193:25	al-Muqawqas	al-Muqawqis
XXXIX:194:1	Al-Muqawqas	Al-Muqawqis
XXXIX:199:2	Ṣufayy	Ṣafī

XXXIX:210:8	Yaḥmid	Yaḥmad
XXXIX:220:12	al-Ṣā'idiyyūn	al-Ṣā'idiyyūn
XXXIX:221:3-4	Yaḥyā [b. Sa'īd al-Qaṭṭan]	Yaḥyā
XXXIX:268:3	Sabī	al-Sabī
XXXIX:285:1-2	al-Akramīn	al-Akramūn

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*EI*¹ , *EI*² : *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 1st ed., 2d ed., Leiden and London, 1913-42, 1960 - .

EI(S) : *The Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, Leiden 1953.

GAL : C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 Leiden 1943.

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EI¹, EI²: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, London and Leiden, first edition, second edition.

GALS: C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literaturs*, Supplementband I, Leiden 1937.

IH: Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen 1859, 1860.

Qur.: Qur'ān (Pickthall's translation—see Bibliography).

W: Al-Wāqidi, *Kitāb al-Maghāzī*, ed. Marsden Jones, 3 vols. with continuous paging, London 1966.

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